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THE
WAY of the WORLD.
A
COMEDY.

Written by Mr. CONGREVE.

Audire est Operæ pretium, procedere rectè
Qui mœchis non vultis----- Hor. Sat. 2. l. 1.
-----Metuat doti deprensa.----- Ibid.



L O N D O N :

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the Strand. MDCCXXXI.



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To the Right Honourable

R A L P H

Earl of *Mountague*, &c.

My LORD,



W HETHER the World will as-
saign me of Vanity, or not, that I
have presum'd to Dedicate this Co-
medy to your Lordship, I am yet in
Doubt: Tho' it may be it is some
degree of Vanity even to doubt of it.

One who has at any time had the Honour of Your
Lordship's Conversation, cannot be suppos'd to
think very meanly of that which he wou'd prefer
to Your Perusal: Yet it were to incur the Im-
putation of too much Sufficiency, to pretend to
such a Merit as might abide the Test of Your Lord-
ship's Censure.

Whatever Value may be wanting to this Play
while yet it is mine, will be sufficiently made up
to it, when it is once become Your Lordship's;
and it is my Security, that I cannot have over-rated
it more by my Dedication, than Your Lordship
will dignify it by Your Patronage.

That it succeeded on the Stage, was almost
beyond my Expectation; for but little of it was
prepar'd for that general Taste which seems now
to be predominant in the Palates of our Audience.

Those Characters which are meant to be ridi-
cul'd in most of our Comedies, are of Fools so
gross, that in my humble Opinion, they shou'd
rather disturb than divert the well-natur'd and re-
flecting Part of an Audience; they are rather Ob-
jects of Charity than Contempt; and instead of

The Dedication.

moving our Mirth, they ought very often to excite our Compassion.

This Reflexion mov'd me to design some Characters, which shou'd appear ridiculous not so much thro' a natural Folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the Stage) as thro' an affected Wit; a Wit, which at the same time that it is affected, is also false. As there is some Difficulty in the Formation of a Character of this Nature, so there is some Hazard which attends the Progress of its Success, upon the Stage: For many come to a Play, so over-charg'd with Criticism, that they very often let fly their Censure, when thro' their Rashness they have mistaken their Aim. This I had Occasion lately to observe: For this Play had been acted two or three Days, before some of these hasty Judges cou'd find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the Character of a *Witwound* and a *Truewit*.

I must beg Your Lordship's Pardon for this Digression from the true Course of this Epistle; but that it may not seem altogether impertinent, I beg, that I may plead the Occasion of it, in part of that Excuse of which I stand in need, for recommending this Comedy to Your Protection. It is only by the Countenance of Your Lordship, and the *Few* so qualify'd, that such who write with Care and Pains can hope to be distinguish'd: For the Prostituted Name of *Poet* promiscuously levels all that bear it.

Terence, the most correct Writer in the World, had a *Scipio* and a *Lelius*, if not to assist him, at least to support him in his Reputation: And notwithstanding his extraordinary Merit, it may be, their Countenance was not more than necessary.

The Purity of his Style, the Delicacy of his Turns, and the Justness of his Characters, were all of them Beauties, which the greater Part of his Audience were incapable of Tasting: Some of the

coursel

The Dedication:

yourself Strokes of *Plautus*, so severely censur'd by *Horace*, were more likely to affect the Multitude; such, who come with expectation to laugh at the last Act of a Play, and are better entertain'd with two or three unseasonable Jest, than with the artful Solution of the *Fable*.

As *Terence* excell'd in his Performances, so had he great Advantages to encourage his Undertakings; for he built most on the Foundations of *Menander*: His Plots were generally modell'd, and his Characters ready drawn to his Hand. He copied *Menander*; and *Menander* had no less Light in the Formation of his Characters, from the Observations of *Theophrastus*, of whom he was a Disciple; and *Theophrastus* it is known was not only the Disciple, but the immediate Successor of *Aristotle*, the first and greatest Judge of Poetry. These were great Models to design by; and the further Advantage which *Terence* possess'd, towards giving his Plays the due Ornaments of Purity of Stile, and Justness of Manners, was not less considerable, from the Freedom of Conversation, which was permitted him with *Letius* and *Scipio*, two of the greatest and most polite Men of his Age. And indeed, the Privilege of such a Conversation, is the only certain Means of attaining to the Perfection of Dialogue.

If it has happen'd in any Part of this Comedy, that I have gain'd a Turn of Stile, or Expression more Correct, or at least more Corrigible than in those which I have formerly written, I must, with equal Pride and Gratitude, ascribe it to the Honour of Your Lordship's admitting me into Your Conversation, and that of a Society where every body else was so well worthy of You, in your Retirement last Summer from the Town: For it was immediately after, that this Comedy was written. If I have fail'd in my Performance, it is only to be regretted, where there were so many, not inferior

The Dedication.

either to a *Scipio* or a *Lelins*, that there shou'd be one wanting, equal in Capacity to a *Terente*.

If I am not mistaken, Poetry is almost the only Art, which has not yet laid Claim to your Lordship's Patronage. Architecture, and Painting, to the great Honour of our Country, have flourish'd under Your Influence and Protection. In the mean time, Poetry, the eldest Sister of all Arts, and Parent of most, seems to have resign'd her Birth-right, by having neglected to pay her Duty to Your Lordship; and by permitting others of a later Extraction, to prepossess that Place in Your Esteem, to which none can pretend a better Title. Poetry, in its Nature, is sacred to the Good and Great; the Relation between them is reciprocal, and they are ever propitious to it. It is the Privilege of Poetry to address to them, and it is their Prerogative alone to give it Protection.

This receiv'd Maxim is a general Apology for all Writers who Consecrate their Labours to great Men: But I could wish, at this time, that this Address were exempted from the common Pre- tence of all Dedications; and that as I can distinguish Your Lordship even among the most Deserving, so this Offering might become remarkable by some particular Instance of Respect, which should assure Your Lordship, that I am, with all due Sense of Your extreme Worthiness and Humanity,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Obedient

and most Oblig'd Humble Servant,

Will. Congreve.



TO

Mr. CONGREVE,

Occasion'd by his COMEDY

CALL'D THE

WAY of the WORLD.

WHEN *Pleasure's falling to the low Delight,
In the vain Joys of the uncertain Sight;
No Sense of Wit when rude Spectators know,
But in distorted Gesture, Farce and Show:
How could, great Author, your aspiring Mind
Dare to write only to the Few Resin'd!
Yet tho' that nice Ambition you pursue,
'Tis not in Congreve's Power to please but few.
Implicitly devoted to his Fame,
Well-dress'd Barbarians know his awful Name.
Tho' senseless they're of Mirth, but when they laugh,
As they feel Wine, but when, 'till drunk, they quaff.*

*On you, from Fate a lavish Portion fell
In ev'ry way of Writing to excell.
Your Muse Applause to Arabella brings,
In Notes as sweet as Arabella sings.
When-e'er you draw an undissembled Woe,
With sweet Distress your Rural Numbers flow.
Pastora's the Complaint of ev'ry Swain,
Pastora still the Echo of the Plain!
Or if your Muse describe, with warming Force,
The wounded Frenchman falling from his Horse.*

A S

To Mr. CONGREVE.

*And her own William glorious in the Strife,
 Bestowing on the prostrate Foe his Life.
 You the great Act as gen'rously rehearse,
 And all the English Fury's in your Verse.
 By your selected Scenes, and handsom Choice,
 Ennobled Comedy exalts her Voice;
 You check unjust Esteem and fond Desire,
 And teach to scorn, what else we shou'd admire.
 The just Impression taught by you we bear,
 The Player acts the World, the World the Players;
 Whom still that World unjustly disesteems,
 Tho' he, alone, professes what he seems:
 But when your Muse assumes her Tragic Part,
 She conquers and she reigns in ev'ry Heart,
 To mourn with her Men cheat their private Woe,
 And gen'rous Pity's all the Grief they know:
 The Widow, who, impatient of Delay,
 From the Town joys must mask it to the Play,
 Joins with your Mourning-Bride's resistless Moan,
 And weeps a Loss she slighted, when her own;
 You give us Torment, and you give us Ease,
 And vary our Afflictions as you please.
 Is not a Heart so kind as yours in Pain,
 To load your Friends with Cares you only feign;
 Your Friends in Grief, compos'd your self, to leave?
 Bu, 'tis the only way you'll e'er deceive.
 Then still, great Sir, your moving Pow'r employ,
 To lull our Sorrow, and correct our Joy.*

R. STEELE.



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PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. *Betterton*.

OF those few Fools who with ill Stars are curst,
Sure scribbling Fools call'd Poets, fare the worst:
For they're a sort of Fools which Fortune makes,
And after she has made 'em Fools, forsakes,
With Nature's Oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent Case,
For Fortune favours all her Idiot-Race:
In her own Nest the Cuckow-Eggs we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the Changling-Kind.
No Portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she dotes on her adopted Care.

Poets are Bubbles, by the Town drawn in,
Suffer'd at first some trifling Stakes to win:
But what unequal Hazards do they run!
Each time they write they venture all they've won:
The Squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone.
This Author, heretofore, has found your Favour;
But pleads no Merit from his past Behaviour.
To build on that might prove a vain Presumption,
Shou'd Grants, to Poets made, admit Resumption:
And in Parnassus he must lose his Seat,
If that be found a forfeited Estate.

He owns, with Toil he wrought the following Scenes;
But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his Pains:
Damn him the more; have no Commiseration
For Dulness on mature Deliberation.
He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off Scene,
Nor, like those peevish Wits, his Play maintain;
Who, to assert their Sense, your Taste arraign.
Some Plot we think he has, and some new Thought;
Some Humour too, no Farce; but that's a Fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
For so Reform'd a Town, who dares correct?
To please, this Time, has been his sole Pretence,
He'll not instruct, lest it shou'd give Offence.
Shou'd he by chance a Knave or Fool expose,
That hurts none here, sure here are none of those.

PROLOGUE.

In short, our Play shall (with your Leave to shew it)
Give you one Instance of a Passive Poet,
Who to your Judgments yields all Resignation;
So Save or Damn, after your own Discretion.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Clarke</i> Fainall, In Love with Mrs. Marwood.	Mr. Betterton.
<i>you</i> Mirabell, In Love with Mrs. Millamant.	Mr. Verbruggen.
<i>Capman</i> Witwoud, } Followers of Mrs. Millamant.	Mr. Bowen.
<i>ale</i> Petulant, }	Mr. Bowman.
<i>postley</i> Sir Wifful Witwoud, Half Brother to Wit-	Mr. Underhill.
woud, and Nephew to Lady Wishfort.	Mr. Bright.
<i>John</i> Waitwell, Servant to Mirabell.	

W O M E N.

{ Lady Wishfort, Enemy to Mirabell, for ha- ving falsely pretended Love to her.	{ Mrs. Leigh.
{ Mrs. Millamant, A fine Lady, Niece to Lady Wishfort, and loves Mirabell.	{ Mrs. Bracegirdle.
{ Mrs. Marwood, Friend to Mr. Fainall, and likes Mirabell.	{ Mrs. Barry.
{ Mrs. Fainall, Daughter to Lady Wishfort, and Wife to Fainall, formerly Friend to Mirabell.	{ Mrs. Bowman.
Feible, Woman to Lady Wishfort.	Mrs. Willis.
Mineing, Woman to Mrs. Millamant.	Mrs. Prince.

Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants.

SCENE, LONDON.

The Time equal to that of the Presentation.

THE



THE
WAY of the WORLD!

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Chocolate-House.

MIRABELL and FAINALL [*Rising from Cards.*] BETTY waiting.

MIRABELL.



YOU are a fortunate Man, Mr. Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mira. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your Revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the Coldness of a losing Gamester lessens the Pleasure of the Winner. I'd no more play with a Man that slighted his ill Fortune, than I'd make Love to a Woman who undervalu'd the Loss of her Reputation.

Mira. You have a Taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your Pleasures.

Fain. Pr'ythee, why so reserv'd? Something has put you out of Humour.

Mira.

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Mira. Not at all: I happen to be grave to Day; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, *Millamant* and you quarrell'd last Night, after I left you; my fair Cousin has some Humours that wou'd tempt the Patience of a Stoick. What, some Coxcomb came in, and was well receiv'd by her, while you were by.

Mira. *Witwoud* and *Petulant*; and what was worse, her Aunt, your Wife's Mother, my evil Genius; or to sum up all in her own Name, my old Lady *Wishfort* came in.

Fain. O there it is then——She has a lasting Passion for you, and with Reason.——What, then my Wife was there?

Mira. Yes, and Mrs. *Marwood* and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave Faces, whisper'd one another; then complain'd aloud of the Vapours, and after fell into a profound Silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mira. For which Reason I resolv'd not to stir. At last the good old Lady broke thro' her painful Taciturnity, with an Inveective against long Visits. I would not have understood her, but *Millamant* joining in the Argument, I rose, and with a constrain'd Smile told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a Visit began to be troublesome; she reden'd and I withdrew, without expecting her Reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in Compliance with her Aunt.

Mira. She is more Mistress of her self, than to be under the Necessity of such a Resignation.

Fain. What? tho' half her Fortune depends upon her Marrying with my Lady's Approbation?

Mira. I was then in such a Humour, that I shou'd have been better pleas'd if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last Night was one of their Cabal-Nights; they have 'em three times a Week, and meet by turns, at one another's Apartments, where they come together like the Coroner's Inquest, to sit upon the murder'd Reputations

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The WAY of the WORLD. 3

putations of the Week. You and I are excluded; and it was once propos'd that all the Male Sex should be excepted; but somebody mov'd that to avoid Scandal there might be one Man of the Community; upon which motion *Watwood* and *Petulant* were enrolled Members.

Mira. And who may have been the Foundress of this Sect? My Lady *Wishfort*; I warrant, who publishes her Detestation of Mankind; and full of the Vigour of Fifty five, declares for a Friend and *Ratafia*; and let Posterity shift for it self, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The Discovery of your sham Addresses to her to conceal your Love to her Niece, has provok'd this Separation: Had you dissembl'd better, Things might have continu'd in the State of Nature.

Mira. I did as much as Man cou'd, with any reasonable Conscience; I proceeded to the very last Act of Flattery with her, and was guilty of a Song in her Commendation. Nay, I got a Friend to put her into a Lampoon, and compliment her with the Impuration of an Affair with a young Fellow, which I carry'd so far, that I told her the malicious Town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a Dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in Labour. The Devil's in't, if an old Woman is to be flatter'd further, unless a Man should endeavour downright personally to debauch her; and that my Vertue forbad me. But for the Discovery of this Amour, I am indebted to your Friend, or your Wife's Friend, Mrs. *Mirwood*.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your Enemy; unless she has made you Advances, which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive Omissions of that Nature.

Mira. She was always civil to me, 'till of late; I confess I am not one of those Coxcombs who are apt to interpret a Woman's good Manners to her Prejudice; and think that she who does not refuse 'em ev'ry thing, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a galant Man, *Mirabell*; and tho' you may have Cruelty enough, not to satisfy a Lady's longing; you have too much Generosity, not to be tender of her Honour. Yet you speak with an Indifference which

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seems to be affected; and confesses you are conscious of a Negligence.

Mira. You pursue the Argument with a Distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a Concern for which the Lady is more indebted to you, than is your Wife.

Fain. Fy, fy, Friend, if you grow censorious I must leave you;——I'll look upon the Gamesters in the next Room.

Mira. Who are they?

Fain. *Petulant* and *Witwoud*——Bring me some Chocolate.

Mira. Betty, what says your Clock?

Bet. Turn'd of the last Canonical Hour, Sir.

Mira. How pertinently the Jade answers me! Ha? almost one a Clock! [*Looking on his Watch.*] O, y'are come——

SCENE II.

Mirabell and Footman,

Mira. Well; is the grand Affair over? You have been something tedious.

Serv. Sir, there's such Coupling at *Pancras*, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a Country Dance. Ours was the last Couple to lead up; and no Hopes appearing of Dispatch, besides, the Parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his Lungs wou'd have fail'd before it came to our Turn; so we drove round to *Dukes-Place*; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mira. So, so, you are sure they are married.

Serv. Married and Bedded, Sir: I am Witness.

Mira. Have you the Certificate.

Serv. Here it is, Sir.

Mira. Has the Tailor brought *Waitwell's* Clothes home, and the new Liveries?

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Mira. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the Consummation 'till farther Order; bid *Waitwell* shake his Ears, and Dame *Partlet* ruffle up her Feathers, and meet me at One a Clock by *Rosamond's*

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The WAY of the WORLD. 5

Pond; that I may see her before she returns to her Lady: And as you tender your Ears be secret.

S C E N E III.

Mirabell, Fainall, Betty.

Fain. Joy of your Success, *Mirabell*; you look pleas'd.

Mira. Ay; I have been engag'd in a Matter of some sort of Mirth, which is not yet ripe for Discovery. I am glad this is not a Cabal-Night. I wonder, *Fainall*, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your Wife to be of such a Party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engag'd are Women and Relations; and for the Men, they are of a Kind too contemptible to give Scandal.

Mira. I am of another Opinion. The greater the Coxcomb, always the more the Scandal: For a Woman who is not a Fool, can have but one Reason for associating with a Man who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see *Witwoud* entertain'd by *Millamant*?

Mira. Of her Understanding I am, if not of her Person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for to give her her Due, she has Wit.

Mira. She has Beauty enough to make any Man think so; and Complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate Lover, methinks you are a Man somewhat too discerning in the Failings of your Mistress.

Mira. And for a discerning Man, somewhat too passionate a Lover; for I like her with all her Faults; nay like her for her Faults. Her Follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those Affectations which in another Woman wou'd be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, *Fainall*, she once us'd me with that Insolence, that in Revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her Failings; I study'd 'em, and got 'em by Rote. The Catalogue was so large, that I was not without Hopes, one Day or other to hate her heartily: To which end I so us'd my self to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my Design and Expectation,

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tation, they gave me ev'ry Hour less and less Disturbance; 'till in a few Days it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeas'd. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own Frailties; and in all probability in a little time longer I shall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her Charms, as you are with her Defects, and my Life on't, you are your own Man again.

Mira. Say you so?

Fain. I, I, I have Experience: I have a Wife, and so forth.

S C E N E IV.

[*To them.*] Messenger.

Mess. Is one Squire *Witwoud* here?

Bet. Yes; What's your Business?

Mess. I have a Letter for him, from his Brother Sir *Wilful*, which I am charg'd to deliver into his own Hands.

Bet. He's in the next Room, Friend—That way.

S C E N E V.

Mirabell, Fainall, Betty.

Mira. What, is the chief of that noble Family in Town, Sir *Wilful Witwoud*?

Fain. He is expected to Day. Do you know him?

Mira. I have seen him, he promises to be an extraordinary Person; I think you have the Honour to be related to him.

Fain. Yes; he is half Brother to this *Witwoud* by a former Wife, who was Sister to my Lady *Wishfort*, my Wife's Mother. If you marry *Millamant*, you must call Cousins too.

Mira. I had rather be his Relation than his Acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to Town in order to equip himself for Travel.

Mira. For Travel! Why the Man that I mean is above Forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the Honour of England, that all Europe shou'd know we have Blockheads of all Ages.

Mira.

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Mira. I wonder there is not an Act of Parliament to save the Credit of the Nation, and prohibit the Exportation of Fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with a little Loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstock'd.

Mira. Pray, are the Follies of this Knight-errant, and those of the Squire his Brother, any thing related?

Fain. Not at all; *Witwoud* grows by the Knight, like Medlar grafted on a Crab. One will melt in your Mouth, and t'other set your Teeth on edge; one is all Pulp, and the other all Core.

Mira. So one will be Rotten before he be Ripe, and the other will be Rotten without ever being Ripe at all.

Fain. Sir *Wilful* is an odd Mixture of Bashfulness and Obstinacy.— But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the Monster in the Tempest; and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of Good-nature, and does not always want Wit.

Mira. Not always; but as often as his Memory fails him, and his Common-place of Comparisons. He is a Fool with a good Memory, and some few Scraps of other Fools Wit. He is one whose Conversation can never be approv'd, yet it is now and then to be endur'd. He has indeed one good Quality, he is not exceptions; for he so passionately affects the Reputation of understanding Rail-ry, that he will construe an Affront into a Jest; and all downright Rudeness and ill Language, Satire and Fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his Picture, you have an Opportunity to do it at full Length. Behold the Original.

SCENE VI.

[To them] *Witwoud*.

Wit. Afford me your Compassion, my Dears; pity me, small; *Mirabell*, pity me.

Mira. I do from my Soul.

Fain. Why, what's the Matter?

Wit. No Letters for me, *Betty*?

Ret. Did not a Messenger bring you one but now, Sir?

Wit.

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Wit. Ay, but no other?

Bet. No, Sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard; — A Messenger, a Mule, a Beast of Burden, he has brought me a Letter from the Fool my Brother, as heavy as a Panegyrick in a Funeral Sermon, or a Copy of Commendatory Verses from one Poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a Forerunner of the Author, as an Epistle Dedicatory.

Mira. A Fool, and your Brother, *Witwoud*?

Wit. Ay, ay, my half Brother. My half Brother he is no nearer upon Honour.

Mira. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a Fool.

Wit. Good, good, *Mirabell*, *le Drole*! Good, good, hang him, don't let's talk of him: — *Fainall*, how does your Lady? Gad, I say any thing in the World to get this Fellow out of my Head. I beg Pardon that I should ask a Man of Pleasure, and the Town, a Question at once so Foreign and Domestick. But I talk like an old Maid at a Marriage; I don't know what I say: But she's the best Woman in the World.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your Commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No Man in Town lives well with a Wife but

Fainall. Your Judgment, *Mirabell*?

Mira. You had better step and ask his Wife, if you would be credibly inform'd.

Wit. *Mirabell*.

Mira. Ay.

Wit. My Dear, I ask ten thousand Pardons; — Gad I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

Mira. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but prithee excuse me, — my Memory is such a Memory.

Mira. Have a care of such Apologies, *Witwoud*; — for I never knew a Fool but he affected to complain either of the Spleen or his Memory.

Fain. What have you done with *Petulant*?

Wit. He's reckoning his Mony, — my Mony it was — I have no Luck To-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at Play; —

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for you are sure to be too hard for him at Repartee: Since you monopolize the Wit that is between you, the Fortune must be his of course.

Mira. I don't find that *Petulant* confesses the Superiority of Wit to be your Talent, *Witwound*.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and wou'd breed Debates—— *Petulant's* my Friend, and a very honest Fellow, and a very pretty Fellow, and has a smattering—— Faith and Troth a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small Wit: Nay, I'll do him Justice. I'm his Friend, I won't wrong him.—— And if he had any Judgment in the World,—— he wou'd not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the Merits of my Friend.

Fain. You don't take your Friend to be over-nicely bred.

Wit. No, no, hang him, the Rogue has no Manners at all, that I must own—— No more Breeding than a Bum-bailly, that I grant you—— 'Tis pity; the Fellow has Fire and Life.

Mira. What, Courage?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that,—— I can't say as to that.—— Yes, faith, in a Controversy, he'll contradict any body.

Mira. Tho' 'twere a Man whom he fear'd, or a Woman whom he lov'd.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks;—— We have all our Failings: You are too hard upon him, you are faith. Let me excuse him,—— I can defend most of his Faults, except one or two: One he has, that's the Truth on't; if he were my Brother, I could not acquit him—— That indeed I cou'd wish were otherwise.

Mira. Ay marry, what's that, *Witwound*?

Wit. O pardon me—— Expose the Infirmities of my Friend.—No, my Dear, excuse me there.

Fain. What I warrant he's unsincere, or 'tis some such Trifle.

Wit. No, no, what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that, his Wit will excuse that: A Wit shou'd no more be sincere, than a Woman constant; one argues a Decay of Parts, as t'other of Beauty.

Mira.

TO *The Way of the World*.

Mira. May be you think him too positive?

Wit. No, no, his being positive is an Incentive to Argument, and keeps up Conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate.

Wit. That! that's his Happiness—His Want of Learning gives him the more Opportunities to shew his natural Parts.

Mira. He wants Words.

Wit. Ay: But I like him for that now; for his Want of Words gives me the Pleasure very often to explain his Meaning.

Fain. He's impudent.

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mira. Vain.

Wit. No.

Mira. What, he speaks unseasonable Truths sometimes, because he has not Wit enough to invent an Evasion.

Wit. Truths! Ha, ha, ha! No, no; since you will have it,—I mean, he never speaks Truth at all,—That's all. He will lye like a Chambermaid, or a Woman of Quality's Porter. Now that is a Fault.

SCENE VII.

[*To them*] Coachman.

Coach. Is Master *Petulant* here, Mistress?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three Gentlemen in a Coach wou'd speak with him.

Fain. O brave *Petulant*! Three!

Bet. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two Dishes of Chocolate and a Glass of Cinnamon-water.

SCENE VIII.

Minabell, Fainall, Witwoud.

Wit. That should be for two fasting Strumpets, and a Bawd troubled with Wind. Now you may know what the Three are.

Mira. You are very free with your Friend's Acquaintance.

Wit. Ay, ay, Friendship without Freedom 'is as dull as Love.

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Love without Enjoyment, or Wine without Toasting; but to tell you a Secret, these are Trulls whom he allows Coach-hire, and something more, by the Week, to call on him once a Day at publick Places.

Mira. How!

Wit. You shall see he won't go to 'em, because there's no more Company here to take notice of him—— Why this is nothing to what he us'd to do:— Before he found out this Way, I have known him call for himself—

Fain. Call for himself! What dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean, why he wou'd slip you out of this Chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him— As soon as your Back was turn'd— whip he was gone;— Then trip to his Lodging, clap on a Hood and Scarf, and a Mask, flap into a Hackney-Coach, and drive hither to the Door again in a trice; where he wou'd send in for himself, that is I mean, call for himself, wait for himself, nay and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a Letter for himself.

Mira. I confess this is something extraordinary—— I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a coming: O I ask his Pardon.

SCENE IX.

Petulant, Mirabell, Fainall, Witwoud, Betty.

Pet. Sir, the Coach stays.

Pet. Well, well; I come;— 'Sbud a Man had as good be a profess'd Midwife, as a profess'd Whoremaster, at this rate; to be knock'd up and rais'd at all Hours, and in all Places. Pox on 'em, I won't come—— D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come—— Let 'em snivel and cry their Hearts out.

Fain. You are very cruel, *Petulant.*

Pet. All's one, let it pass—— I have a Humour to be cruel.

Mira. I hope they are not Persons of Condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition, Condition's a dry'd Fig, if I am not in Humour—— By this Hand, if they were your—a——a——your What-dee-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want Appetite.

Mira.

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Mira. What-dee-call-'ems! What are they, *Witwoud*?

Wit. Empresses, my Dear—— By your What-dee-call-'ems he means Sultana Queens.

Pet. Ay, *Roxolana's*.

Mira. Cry you Mercy.

Fain. *Witwoud* says they are——

Pet. What does he say th'are?

Wit. I; fine Ladies I say.

Pet. Pass on, *Witwoud*—— Harkee, by this Light his Relations—— Two Co-heiresses his Cousins, and an old Aunt, who loves Catterwauling better than a Conventicle.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha, I had a mind to see how the Rogue would come off— Ha, ha, ha; Gad I can't be angry with him, if he had said they were my Mother and my Sisters.

Mira. No.

Wit. No; the Rogue's Wit and Readiness of Invention charm me, dear *Petulant*.

Bet. They are gone, Sir, in great Anger.

Pet. Enough, let 'em trundel. Anger helps Complexion, saves Paint.

Fain. This Contenance is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes Court to *Millamant*, and swear he has abandon'd the whole Sex for her sake.

Mira. Have you not left off your impudent Pretension there yet? I shall cut your Throat, some time or other, *Petulant*, about that Business.

Pet. Ay, ay, let that pass—— There are other Throats to be cut.——

Mira. Meaning mine, Sir?

Pet. Not I—— I mean no Body—— I know nothing—— But there are Uncles and Nephews in the World—— And they may be Rivals—— What then? All's one for that——

Mira. How! Harkee, *Petulant*, come hither—— Explain, or I shall call your Interpreter.

Pet. Explain; I know nothing—— Why you have an Uncle, have you not, lately come to Town, and lodges by my Lady *Wishfort's*?

Mira. True.

Pet. Why that's enough—— You and he are not Friends
and

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and if he shou'd marry and have a Child, you may be disinherited, ha?

Mira. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this Truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why then say I know something.

Mira. Come, thou art an honest Fellow, *Petulant*, and shalt make Love to my Mistress, thou sha't, Faith. What hast thou heard of my Uncle?

Pet. I, nothing I. If Throats are to be cut, let Swords clash; snug's the Word, I shrug and am silent.

Mira. O Raillery, Raillery. Come, I know thou art in the Womens Secrets—— What, you're a Cabalist; I know you staid at *Millamant's* last Night, after I went. Was there any Mention made of my Uncle, or me? Tell me. If thou hadst but Good-nature equal to thy Wit, *Petulant*, *Tony Witwoud*, who is now thy Competitor in Fame, wou'd shew as dim by thee as a dead Whiting's Eye by a Pearl of Orient; he wou'd no more be seen by thee, than *Mercury* is by the Sun, Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common Sense then, for the future?

Mira. Faith I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that Heav'n may grant it thee in the mean time.

Pet. Well, harkee.

Fain. *Petulant* and you both will find *Mirabell* as warm a Rival as a Lover.

Wit. Pshaw, pshaw, that she laughs at *Petulant* is plain. And for my part—— But that it is almost a Fashion to admire her, I shou'd—— Harkee—— To tell you a Secret, but let it go no farther—— Between Friends, I shall never break my Heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsom; but she's a sort of an uncertain Woman.

Fain. I thought you had dy'd for her.

Wit. Umh—— No——

Fain. She has Wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow any body else—— Now, Demme, I shou'd hate that, if she were as handsom as *Cleopatra*. *Mirabell* is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

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Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We staid pretty late there last Night; and heard something of an Uncle to *Mirabell*, who is lately come to Town,—and is between him and the best Part of his Estate; *Mirabell* and he are at some distance, as my Lady *Wishfort* has been told; and you know she hates *Mirabell* worse than a Quaker hates a Parrot, or than a Fishmonger hates a hard Frost. Whether this Uncle has seen Mrs. *Millamant* or not, I cannot say; but there were Items of such a Treaty being in Embrio; and if it should come to Life, poor *Mirabell* wou'd be in some sort unfortunately fobb'd & faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible *Millamant* shou'd hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my Dear, I can't tell; she's a Woman, and a kind of a Humorist.

Mira. And this is the Sum of what you cou'd collect last Night.

Pet. The Quintessence. May be *Witwoud* knows more, he stay'd longer—— Besides, they never mind him; they say any thing before him.

Mira. I thought you had been the greatest Favourite.

Pet. Ay, *tête à tête*; but not in publick, because I make Remarks.

Mira. You do?

Pet. Ay, ay; pox, I'm malicious, Man. Now he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him—— The Fellow's well bred; he's what you call a—— What-dee-call-'em, a fine Gentleman: But he's silly withal.

Mira. I thank you, I know as much as my Curiosity requires. *Fainall*, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Ay, I'll take a Turn before Dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the Park; the Ladies talk'd of being there.

Mira. I thought you were oblig'd to watch for your Brother Sir *Wilfull*'s Arrival.

Wit. No, no; he comes to his Aunt's, my Lady *Wishfort*: Pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the Fool?

Pet. Beg him for his Estate, that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one Trouble with you both.

Wit. O rare *Petulant*; thou art as quick as Fire in a frosty

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frosty Morning; thou shalt to the *Mall* with us, and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a Humour to be severe.

Mira. Are you? Pray then walk by your selves— Let not us be accessary to your putting the Ladies out of Countenance with your senseless Ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handfom Woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what? Then let 'em either shew their Innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else shew their Discretion by not hearing what they wou'd not be thought to understand.

Mira. But hast not thou then Sense enough to know that thou ought'st to be most asham'd thy self, when thou hast put another out of Countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this Hand— I always take Blushing either for a Sign of Guilt, or ill Breeding.

Mira. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the Error of your Judgment in defence of your Practice.

*Where Modesty's Ill-manners, 'tis but fit
That Impudence and Malice pass for Wit.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

St. JAMES'S PARK.

Mrs. FAINALL and Mrs. MARWOOD.

Mrs. FAINALL.

AY, ay, dear *Marwood*, if we will be happy, we must find the Means in our selves, and among our selves. Men are ever in Extremes; either doating, or averse. While they are Lovers, if they have Fire and Sense, their Jealousies are insupportable: And when they cease to Love, (we ought to think at least) they lothe; they look upon us with Horror and Distaste; they meet us like the Ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us.

Mrs. Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy Circumstance of Life,

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that Love shou'd ever die before us; and that the Man so often shou'd out-live the Lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left, than never to have been lov'd. To pass our Youth in dull Indifference, to refuse the Sweets of Life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous, as to wish to have been born Old, because we one Day must be Old. For my part, my Youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my Possession.

Mrs. Fain. Then it seems you dissemble an Aversion to Mankind, only in compliance to my Mother's Humour.

Mrs. Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no Taste of those insipid dry Discourses, with which our Sex of force must entertain themselves, apart from Men. We may affect Endearments to each other, profess eternal Friendships, and seem to dote like Lovers; but 'tis not in our Natures long to persevere. Love will resume his Empire in our Breasts, and every Heart, or soon or late, receive and readmit him as its lawful Tyrant.

Mrs. Fain. Bless me, how have I been deceiv'd! Why you profess a Libertine.

Mrs. Mar. You see my Friendship by my Freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your Sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fain. Never.

Mrs. Mar. You hate Mankind?

Mrs. Fain. Heartily, Inveterately.

Mrs. Mar. Your Husband?

Mrs. Fain. Most transcendently; ay, tho' I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs. Mar. Give me your Hand upon it.

Mrs. Fain. There.

Mrs. Mar. I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

Mrs. Fain. Is it possible? Dost thou hate those Viper Men?

Mrs. Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fain. There spoke the Spirit of an *Amazon*, a *Penthesilea*.

Mrs. Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my Aversion further.

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Mrs. Fain. How?

Mrs. Mar. Faith by marrying; if I cou'd but find one that lov'd me very well, and would be thoroughly sensible of ill Usage, I think I should do my self the Violence of undergoing the Ceremony.

Mrs. Fain. You would not make him a Cuckold?

Mrs. Mar. No; but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. Fain. Why had not you as good do it?

Mrs. Mar. O if he shou'd ever discover it, he wou'd then know the worst, and be out of his Pain; but I wou'd have him ever to continue upon the Rack of Fear and Jealousy.

Mrs. Fain. Ingenious Mischief! Wou'd thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. Wou'd I were.

Mrs. Fain. You change Colour.

Mrs. Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs. Fain. So do I; but I can hear him nam'd. But what Reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs. Mar. I never lov'd him; he is, and always] was insufferably proud.

Mrs. Fain. By the Reason you give for your Aversion, one wou'd think it dissembled; for you have laid a Fault to his Charge, of which his Enemies must acquit him.

Mrs. Mar. O then it seems you are one of his favourable Enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs. Fain. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

Mrs. Mar. What ails you?

Mrs. Fain. My Husband. Don't you see him? He turn'd short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

SCENE II.

[To them] Fainall and Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. Ha, ha, ha; he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs. Fain. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My Dear.

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Mrs. Fain. My Soul.

Fain. You don't look well to Day, Child.

Mrs. Fain. D'ye think so?

Mira. He is the only Man that does, Madam.

Mrs. Fain. The only Man that wou'd tell me so at least; and the only Man from whom I cou'd hear it without Mortification.

Fain. O my Dear I am satisfy'd of your Tenderneſs; I know you cannot reſent any thing from me; eſpecially what is an effect of my Concern.

Mrs. Fain. Mr. *Mirabell*, my Mother interrupted you in a pleaſant Relation laſt Night, I wou'd fain hear it out.

Mira. The Perſons concern'd in that Affair, have yet a tolerable Reputation. — I am afraid Mr. *Fainall* will be cenſorious.

Mrs. Fain. He has a Humour more prevailing than his Curioſity, and will willingly diſpenſe with the hearing of one ſcandal uſ Story, to avoid giving an Occaſion to make another by being ſeen to walk with his Wife. This way, Mr. *Mirabell*, and I dare promiſe you will oblige uſ both.

S C E N E III.

Fainall, *Mrs. Marwood*.

Fain. Excellent Creature! Well, ſure if I ſhou'd live to be rid of my Wife, I ſhou'd be a miſerable Man.

Mrs. Mar. Ay!

Fain. For having only that one Hope, the Accompliſhment of it, of Conſequence muſt put an end to all my Hopes; and what a Wretch is he who muſt ſurvive his Hopes! Nothing remains when that Day comes, but to ſit down and weep like *Alexander*, when he wanted other Worlds to conquer.

Mrs. Mar. Will you not follow 'em?

Fain. Faith, I think not.

Mrs. Mar. Pray let uſ; I have a Reaſon.

Fain. You are not Jealous?

Mrs. Mar. Of whom?

Fain. Of *Mirabell*.

Mrs. Mar. If I am, is it inconſiſtent with my Love to you that I am tender of your Honour?

Fain. You wou'd intimate then, as if they were a ſellow-feeſing between my Wife and him.

Mr.

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Mrs. Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she wou'd be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too Insensible.

Mrs. Mar. It may be you are deceiv'd.

Fain. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

Mrs. Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceiv'd, Madam, and you are false.

Mrs. Mar. That I am false! What mean you?

Fain. To let you know I see through all your little Arts—Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembl'd your Aversion. Your mutual Jealousies of one another, have made you clasp 'till you have both struck Fire. I have seen the warm Confession red'ning on your Cheeks, and sparkling from your Eyes.

Mrs. Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not — 'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross Advances made him by my Wife; that by permitting her to be engag'd, I might continue unsuspected in my Pleasures; and take you oftner to my Arms in full Security. But cou'd you think, because the nodding Husband wou'd not wake, that e'er the watchful Lover slept?

Mrs. Mar. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fain. With Infidelity, with loving another, with Love of *Mirabell*.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false. I challenge you to shew an Instance that can confirm your groundless Accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your Resentment follows his Neglect. An Instance! The Injuries you have done him are a Proof: Your interposing in his Love. What cause had you to make Discoveries of his pretended Passion? To undeceive the credulous Aunt, and be the officious Obstacle of his Match with *Millamant*?

Mrs. Mar. My Obligations to my Lady urg'd me: I had profess'd a Friendship to her; and cou'd not see her easy Nature so abus'd by that Dissembler.

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Fain. What, was it Conscience then? Profess'd a Friendship! O the pious Friendships of the Female Sex!

Mrs. Mar. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty Vows of Men, whether professing Love to us, or mutual Faith to one another.

Fain. Ha, ha, ha; you are my Wife's Friend too.

Mrs. Mar. Shame and Ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me! Have I been false to her, thro' strict Fidelity to you, and sacrific'd my Friendship to keep my Love inviolate? And have you the Baseness to charge me with the Guilt, unmindful of the Merit! To you it shoud be meritorious, that I have been vicious: And do you reflect that Guilt upon me, which shoud lie buried in your Bosom?

Fain. You misinterpret my Reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight Account you once cou'd make of strictest Ties, when set in Competition with your Love to me.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false, you urg'd it with deliberate Malice — 'Twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your Guilt, not your Resentment, begets your Rage. If yet you lov'd, you cou'd forgive a Jealousy: But you are stung to find you are discover'd.

Mrs. Mar. It shall be all discover'd. You too shall be discover'd; be sure you shall. I can but be expos'd — If I do it my self I shall prevent your Baseness.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mrs. Mar. Disclose it to your Wife; own what has past between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mrs. Mar. By all my Wrongs I'll do't — I'll publish to the World the Injuries you have done me, both in my Fame and Fortune: With both I trusted you, you Bankrupt in Honour, as indigent of Wealth.

Fain. Your Fame I have preserv'd. Your Fortune has been bestow'd as the Prodigality of your Love would have it, in Pleasures which we both have shar'd. Yet, had not you been false, I had ere this repaid it — 'Tis true — had you permitted *Mirabell* with *Millamant* to have stoll'n their Marriage, my Lady had been incens'd beyond all Means of Reconcilement: *Millamant* had forfeited the

Moiety

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Moiety of her Fortune; which then wou'd have descended to my Wife; — And wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful Prize of a rich Widow's Wealth, and squander it on Love and you?

Mrs. Mar. Deceit and frivolous Pretence.

Fain. Death, am I not married? What's Pretence? Am I not imprison'd, fetter'd? Have I not a Wife? Nay a Wife that was a Widow, a young Widow, a handsome Widow; and wou'd be again a Widow, but that I have a Heart of Proof, and something of a Constitution to baffle thro' the ways of Wedlock and this World. Will you yet be reconcil'd to Truth and me?

Mrs. Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent — I hate you, and shall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs. Mar. I lothe the Name of Love after such Usage; and next to the Guilt with which you wou'd asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewel.

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs. Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Mar. I care not — Let me go — Break my Hands, do — I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fain. I wou'd not hurt you for the World. Have I no other Hold to keep you here?

Mrs. Mar. Well, I have deserv'd it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs. Mar. Poor dissembling! — O that — Well, it is not yet —

Fain. What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late —

Mrs. Mar. No, it is not yet too late — I have that Comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mrs. Mar. But not to lothe, detest, abhor Mankind, my self and the whole treacherous World.

Fain. Nay, this is Extravagance — Come, I ask your Pardon — No Tears — I was to blame, I cou'd not love you and be easy in my Doubts — Pray forbear — I believe you; I'm convinc'd I've done you wrong; and any way, ev'ry way will make amends; — I'll

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hate my Wife yet more, Damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, any where, to another World, I'll marry thee— Be pacify'd—— 'Sdeath they come, hide your Face, your Tears—— You have a Mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way, be persuaded.

S C E N E III.

Mirabell (and Mrs. Fainall.

Mrs. Fain. They are here yet.

Mira. They are turning into the other Walk.

Mrs. Fain. While I only hated my Husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despis'd him, he's too offensive.

Mira. O you shou'd hate with Prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Yes, for I have lov'd with Indiscretion.

Mira. You shou'd have just so much Disgust for your Husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your Lover.

Mrs. Fain. You have been the Cause that I have lov'd without Bounds, and wou'd you set Limits to that Aversion, of which you have been the Occasion? Why did you make me marry this Man?

Mira. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous Actions? To save that Idol Reputation. If the Familiarities of our Loves had produc'd that Consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where cou'd you have fix'd a Father's Name with Credit, but on a Husband? I knew *Fainall* to be a Man lavish of his Morals, an interested and professing Friend, a false and a designing Lover; yet one whose Wit and outward fair Behaviour, have gain'd a Reputation with the Town, enough to make that Woman stand excus'd, who has suffer'd her self to be won by his Addresses. A better Man ought not to have been sacrific'd to the Occasion; a worse had not answer'd to the Purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your Remedy.

Mrs. Fain. I ought to stand in some Degree of Credit with you, *Mirabell*.

Mira. In Justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole Design, and put it in your Pow'r to ruin or advance my Fortune.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Fain. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended Uncle.

Mira. Waitwell, my Servant.

Mrs. Fain. He is an humble Servant to *Foible* my Mother's Woman, and may win her to your Interest.

Mira. Care is taken for that — She is won and worn by this time. They were married this Morning.

Mrs. Fain. Who?

Mira. Waitwell and *Foible*. I wou'd not tempt my Servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your Mother, in hopes to ruin me, shou'd consent to marry my pretended Uncle, he might, like *Mosca* in the *Fox*, stand upon Terms; so I made him sure beforehand.

Mrs. Fain. So, if my poor Mother is caught in a Contract you will discover the Imposture betimes; and release her by producing a Certificate of her Galant's former Marriage.

Mira. Yes, upon Condition that she consent to my Marriage with her Niece, and surrender the Moiety of her Fortune in her Possession.

Mrs. Fain. She talk'd last Night of endeavouring at a Match between *Millamant* and your Uncle.

Mira. That was by *Foible's* Direction, and my Instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs. Fain. Well, I have an Opinion of your Success; for I believe my Lady will do any thing to get an Husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to any thing to get rid of him.

Mira. Yes, I think the good Lady wou'd marry any thing that resembl'd a Man, though 'twere no more than what a Butler could pinch out of a Napkin.

Mrs. Fain. Female Frailty! We must all come to fit, if we live to be Old, and feel the craving of a false Appetite when the true is decay'd.

Mira. An old Woman's Appetite is deprav'd like that of a Girl — 'Tis the Green-Sickness of a second Childhood; and like the faint Offer of a latter Spring, serves but to wither in the Fall; and withers in an affected Bloom.

Mrs. Fain. Here's your Mistress.

SCENE

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SCENE IV.

[*To them*] *Mrs. Millamant*, *Witwoud*, *Mincing*.

Mira. Here she comes i'faith full Sail, with her Fan spread and Streamers out, and a Shoal of Fools for Tenders——Ha, no, I cry her Mercy.

Mrs. Fain. I see but one poor empty Sculler; and he tows her Woman after him.

Mira. You seem to be unattended, Madam,——You us'd to have the *Beaumont* Throng after you; and a Flock of gay fine Perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like Moths about a Candle——I had like to have lost my Comparison for want of Breath.

Milla. O I have deny'd my self Airs to Day. I have walk'd as fast through the Croud——

Wit. As a Favourite just disgraced; and with as few Followers.

Milla. Dear Mr. *Witwoud*, Truce with your Similitudes: For I am as Sick of 'em——

Wit. As a Physician of a good Air——I cannot help it, Madam, tho' 'tis against my self.

Milla. Yet again! *Mincing*, stand between me and his Wit.

Wit. Do, *Mrs. Mincing*, like a Skreen before a great Fire. I confess I do blaze to Day, I am too bright.

Mrs. Fain. But, dear *Millamant*, why were you so long?

Milla. Long! Lord, have I not made violent haste? I have ask'd every living Thing I met for you; I have enquir'd after you, as after a new Fashion.

Wit. Madam, Truce with your Similitudes——No, you met her Husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mira. By your leave *Witwoud*, that were like enquiring after an old Fashion, to ask a Husband for his Wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Mrs. Fain. You were dress'd before I came abroad.

Milla. Ay, that's true——O but then I had——
Mincing, what had I? Why was I so long?

Minc. O Mem, your Laship staid to peruse a Pacquet of Letters.

Milla. O ay, Letters—I had Letters—I am persecuted with Letters—I hate Letters—No Body knows how to

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write Letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why—— They serve one to pin up one's Hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, Madam, do you pin up your Hair with all your Letters; I find I must keep Copies.

Milla. Only with those in Verse, Mr. *Witwoud*. I never pin up my Hair with Prose. I think I try'd once, *Mincing*.

Minc. O Mem, I shall never forget it.

Milla. Ay, poor *Mincing* tist and tist all the Morning.

Minc. 'Till I had the Cramp in my Fingers, I'll vow Mem. And all to no purpose. But when your Laship pins it up with Poetry, it sits so pleasant the next Day as any Thing, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed, so crips?

Minc. You're such a Critick, Mr. *Witwoud*.

Milla. *Mirabell*, Did you take Exceptions last Night? O ay, and went away—— Now I think on't I'm angry?—— No, now I think on't I'm pleas'd—— For I believe I gave you some Pain.

Mira. Does that please you?

Milla. Infinitely; I love to give Pain.

Mira. You wou'd affect a Cruelty which is not in your Nature; your true Vanity is in the Power of pleasing.

Milla. O I ask your Pardon for that—— Ones Cruelty is ones Power, and when one parts with ones Cruelty, one parts with ones Power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mira. Ay, ay, suffer your Cruelty to ruin the Object of your Power, to destroy your Lover—— And then how vain, how lost a Thing you'll be? Nay, 'tis true: You are no longer handsom when you've lost your Lover; your Beauty dies upon the Instant: For Beauty is the Lover's Gift; 'tis he bestows your Charms—— Your Glass is all a Cheat. The Ugly and the Old, whom the Looking-glass mortifies, yet after Commendation can be flatter'd by it, and discover Beauties in it: For that reflects our Praises, rather than your Face.

Milla. O the Vanity of these Men! *Fainall*, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they cou'd not commend one,

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one, if one was not handſom. Beauty the Lover's Gift
—— Lord, what is a Lover, that it can give? Why
one makes Lovers as faſt as one pleaſes, and they live as
long as one pleaſes, and they die as ſoon as one pleaſes:
And then if one pleaſes one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why you make no more of making
of Lovers, Madam, than of making ſo many Card-
matches.

Milla. One no more owes ones Beauty to a Lover,
than ones Wit to an Echo: They can but reflect what
we look and ſay; vain empty Things if we are ſilent or
unſeen, and want a Being.

Mira. Yet, to thoſe two vain empty Things, you owe
two the greateſt Pleaſures of your Life.

Milla. How ſo?

Mira. To your Lover you owe the Pleaſure of hearing
your ſelves praiſ'd; and to an Echo the Pleaſure of hear-
ing your ſelves talk.

Wit. But I know a Lady that loves Talking ſo inceſ-
ſantly, ſhe won't give an Echo fair play; ſhe has that
everlaſting Rotation of Tongue, that an Echo muſt wait
'till ſhe dies, before it can catch her laſt Words.

Milla. O Fiction; *Fainall*, let us leave theſe Men.

Mira. Draw off *Witwoud*. [*Aſide to Mrs. Fainall*,

Mrs. Fain. Immediately; I have a Word or two for
Mr. Witwoud.

S C E N E V.

Millamant, Mirabell, Mincing.

Mira. I wou'd beg a little private Audience too ——
You had the Tyranny to deny me laſt Night; tho' you
knew I came to impart a Secret to you that concern'd
my Love.

Milla. You ſaw I was engag'd.

Mira. Unkind. You had the leiſure to entertain a Herd
of Fools; Things who viſit you from their exceſſive Idle-
neſs; beſtowing on your Eaſineſs that Time, which is
the Incumbrance of their Lives. How can you find
Delight in ſuch Society? It is impoſſible they ſhou'd ad-
mire you, they are not capable: Or 'if they were, it
ſhou'd be to you as a Mortification; for ſure to pleaſe a
Fool is ſome degree of Folly.

Milla.

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Milla. I please my self — Besides, sometimes to converse with Fools is for my Health.

Mira. Your Health! Is there a worse Disease than the Conversation of Fools?

Milla. Yes, the Vapours; Fools are Physick for it, next to *Assa foetida*.

Mira. You are not in a Course of Fools?

Milla. *Mirabell*, if you persist in this offensive Freedom — you'll displease me — I think I must resolve after all, not to have you — We shan't agree.

Mira. Not in our Physick it may be.

Milla. And yet our Distemper in all likelihood will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by Advice, and so tedious to be told of ones Faults — I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you *Mirabell* — I'm resolv'd — I think — You may go — Ha, ha, ha. What wou'd you give, that you could help loving me?

Mira. I wou'd give something that you did not know I cou'd not help it.

Milla. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mira. I say that a Man may as soon make a Friend by his Wit, or a Fortune by his Honesty, as win a Woman with Plain-dealing and Sincerity.

Milla. Sententious *Mirabell*! Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise Face, like *Solomon* at the dividing of the Child in an old Tapestry Hanging.

Mira. You are merry, Madam, but I would persuade you for a Moment to be serious.

Milla. What, with that Face? No, if you keep your Countenace, 'tis impossible I shou'd hold mine. Well, after all there is something very moving in a Love-sick Face. Ha, ha, ha — Well I won't laugh, don't be peevish — Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a Watch-light. Well, *Mirabell*, if ever you will win me woo me now — Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well; — I see they are walking away.

Mira. Can you not find in the variety of your Disposition one Moment —

Milla

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Milla. To hear you tell me *Foible's* Marry'd, and your Plot like to speed——No.

Mira. But how you came to know it——

Milla. Without the help of the Devil, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me her self. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

S C E N E VI.

Mirabell alone.

Mira. I have something more——Gone——Think of you! To think of a Whirlwind, tho' 'twere in a Whirlwind, were a Case of more steady Contemplation; a very Tranquillity of Mind and Mansion. A Fellow that lives in a Windmill, has not a more whimsical Dwelling than the Heart of a Man that is lodg'd in a Woman. There is no Point of the Compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turn'd; and by one as well as another; for Motion not Method is their Occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in Love, is to be made wise from the Dictates of Reason, and yet persevere to play the Fool by the force of Instinct.——O here come my Pair of Turtles,——What, billing so sweetly! Is not *Valentine's* Day over with you yet?

S C E N E VII.

[*To him*] *Waitwell*, *Foible*.

Mira. Sirrah, *Waitwell*, why sure you think you were marry'd for your own Recreation, and not for my Conveniencey.

Wait. Your Pardon, Sir. With Submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful Delights; but still with an Eye to Business, Sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your Directions as readily as my Instructions, Sir, your Affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mira. Give you Joy, Mrs. *Foible*.

Foib. O-las, Sir, I'm so asham'd——I'm afraid my Lady has been in a Thousand Inquietudes for me. But I protest, Sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, Sir. It was my Fault that she did not make more.

Mira. That I believe.

Foib.

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Foib. But I told my Lady as you instructed me, Sir. That I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland your Uncle; and that I wou'd put her Ladyship's Picture in my Pocket to shew him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamour'd of her Beauty, that he burns with Impatience to lie at her Ladyship's Feet and worship the Original.

Mira. Excellent *Foible*! Matrimony has made you eloquent in Love.

Wait. I think she has profited, Sir. I think so.

Foib. You have seen Madam Millamant, Sir?

Mira. Yes.

Foib. I told her, Sir, because I did not know that you might find an Opportunity; she had so much Company last Night.

Mira. Your Diligence will merit more—in the mean time——— [Gives Money.]

Foib. O dear Sir, your humble Servant.

Wait. Spouse.

Mira. Stand off, Sir, not a Penny——Go on and prosper, *Foible*——The Lease shall be made good and the Farm stock'd, if we succeed.

Foib. I don't question your Generosity, Sir: And you need not doubt of Success. If you have no more Commands, Sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my Lady is at her Toilet, and can't dress 'till I come.——O dear, I'm sure that [Looking out] was Mrs. Marwood that went by in a Mask; it she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my Lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your Servant, Sir. B'w'y Waitwell.

S C E N E VII.

Mirabell, Waitwell.

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you please. The Jade's so pert upon her Preferment she forgets her self.

Mira. Come, Sir, will you endeavour to forget your self—and transform into Sir Rowland.

Wait. Why, Sir; it will be impossible I shou'd remember my self——Marry'd, Knighted and attended all in one Day! 'Tis enough to make any Man forget himself. The Difficulty will be how to recover my Acquaintance and Familiarity with my former self; and fall from my Transformation

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formation to a Reformation into *Waitwell*. Nay, I shan't be quite the same *Waitwell* neither——for now I remember me, I'm marry'd, and can't be my own Man again.

*As there's my Grief; that's the sad Change of Life;
To lose my Title, and yet keep my Wife.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Room in Lady Wishfort's House.

Lady Wishfort at her Toilet, Peg waiting.

Lady. Merciful, no News of *Foible* yet?
Peg. No, Madam.

Lady. I have no more Patience——If I have not fretted my self 'till I am pale again, there's no Veracity in me. Fetch me the Red——the Red, do you hear, Sweet-heart? An errant Ash-colour, as I'm a Person. Look you how this Wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little Red? Didst thou not hear me, Mopus?

Peg. The red *Ratafia* does your Ladyship mean, or the Cherry-Brandy?

Lady. *Ratafia*, Fool. No, Fool. Not the *Ratafia*, Fool——Grant me Patience! I mean the *Spanish Paper*, Idiot, Complexion Darling. Paint, Paint, Paint, dost thou understand that, Changeling, dangling thy Hands like Bobbins before thee? Why dost thou not stir, Puppet? thou wooden Thing upon Wires.

Peg. Lord, Madam, your Ladyship is so impatient——I cannot come at the Paint, Madam, Mrs. *Foible* has lock'd it up, and carry'd the Key with her.

Lady. A Pox take you both——Fetch me the Cherry-Brandy then.

SCENE II.

Lady Wishfort.

I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. *Qualmsick* the Curate's Wife, that's always breeding——Wench, come, come, Wench, what art thou doing, Sipping? Tasting? Save thee, dost thou not know the Bottle?

SCENE II

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SCENE III.

Lady Wishfort, Peg with a Bottle and China Cup.

Peg. Madam, I was looking for a Cup.

Lady. A Cup, save thee, and what a Cup hast thou brought! Dost thou take me for a *Fairy*, to drink out of an *Acorn*? Why didst thou not bring thy *Thimble*? Hast thou ne'er a *Brass-Thimble* clinking in thy Pocket with a bit of *Nutmeg*? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill.—— So——again. See who that is——[*One knocks.*] Set down the Bottle first. Here, here, under the Table——What, wou'dst thou go with the Bottle in thy Hand like a *Tapster*. As I'm a Person, this Wench has liv'd in an Inn upon the Road, before she came to me, like *Maritornes* the *Asturian* in *Don Quixote*. No *Foible* yet?

Peg. No Madam, *Mrs. Marwood*.

Lady. O *Marwood*, let her come in. Come in good *Marwood*.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] *Mrs. Marwood.*

Mrs. Mar. I'm surpriz'd to find your Ladyship in *Dishabillé* at this time of Day.

Lady. *Foible's* a lost Thing; has been abroad since Morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs. Mar. I saw her but now, as I came mask'd through the Park, in Conference with *Mirabell*.

Lady. With *Mirabell*! You call my Blood into my Face, with mentioning that Traitor. She durst not have the Confidence. I sent her to negotiate an Affair, in which if I'm detected I'm undone. If that wheedling Villain has wrought upon *Foible* to detect me, I'm ruin'd. Oh my dear Friend, I'm a Wretch of Wretches if I'm detected.

Mrs. Mar. O Madam, you cannot suspect *Mrs. Foible's* Integrity.

Lady. O, he carries Poison in his Tongue that wou'd corrupt Integrity it self. If she has given him an Opportunity, she has as good as put her Integrity into his Hands. Ah dear *Marwood*, what's Integrity to an Opportunity?——
Hark

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Hark! I hear her — Dear Friend, retire into my Closet, that I may examine her with more Freedom — You'll pardon me, dear Friend, I can make bold with you — There are Books over the Chimney — — *Quarles* and *Pryn*, and the *Short View of the Stage*, with *Bunyan's* Works to entertain you. — Go, you Thing, and send her in. [To Peg.

SCENE V.

Lady Wishfort, Foible.

Lady. O *Foible*, where hast thou been? what hast thou been doing?

Foib. Madam, I have seen the Party.

Lady. But what hast thou done?

Foib. Nay, 'tis your Ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promis'd. But a Man so enamour'd — so transported! Well, if worshipping of Pictures be a Sin — Poor Sir *Rowland*, I say.

Lady. The Miniature has been counted like — But hast thou not betray'd me, *Foible*? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless *Mirabell*? — What hadst thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foib. So, the Devil has been beforehand with me, what shall I say? — Alas, Madam, could I help it, if I met that confident Thing? Was I in Fault? if you had heard how he us'd me, and all upon your Ladyship's Account, I'm sure you wou'd not suspect my Fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst I cou'd have born: But he had a Fling at your Ladyship too; and then I cou'd not hold: But i'faith I gave him his own,

Lady. Me? What did the filthy Fellow say?

Foib. O Madam; 'tis a Shame to say what he said — With his Taunts and his Fleers, tossing up his Nose. Humh (says he) what you are a hatching some Plot (says he) you are so early abroad, or Catering (says he) ferreting for some disbanded Officer, I warrant — Half Pay is but thin Subsistence (says he) — Well, what Pension does your Lady propose? Let me see (says he) what she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated (says he) and —

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Lady. Ods my Life, I'll have him, I'll have him murder'd. I'll have him poison'd. Where does he eat? I'll marry a Drawer to have him poison'd in his Wine. I'll send for *Robin* from *Lockets*—Immediately.

Foib. Poison him? Poisoning's too good for him! Starve him, Madam, starve him; marry Sir *Rowland*, and get him disinherited. O you wou'd bless your self, to hear what he said.

Lady. A Villain, superannuated!

Foib. Humh (says he) I hear you are laying Designs against me too (says he) and Mrs. *Millamant* is to marry my Uncle; (he does not suspect a Word of your Ladyship;) but (says he) I'll fit you for that, I warrant you (says he) I'll hamper you for that (says he) you and your old Frippery too (says he) I'll handle you.——

Lady. Audacious Villain! handle me, wou'd he durst—Frippery? old Frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouth'd Fellow? I'll be marry'd To-morrow, I'll be contracted To-night.

Foib. The sooner the better. Madam.

Lady. Will Sir *Rowland* be here, say'st thou? when, *Foible*?

Foib. Incontinently, Madam. No new Sheriff's Wife expects the Return of her Husband after Knighthood, with that Impatience in which Sir *Rowland* burns for the dear Hour of kissing your Ladyship's Hand after Dinner

Lady. Frippery? superannuated Frippery! I'll Frippery the Villain; I'll reduce him to Frippery and Rags: A Taterdernalion——I hope to see him hung with Tatters, like a *Long-Lane* Penthouse, or a Gibbet-Thief. A slander-mouth'd Railer: I warrant the Spendthrift Prodigal's in Debt as much as the Million Lottery, or the whole Court upon a Birth-Day. I'll spoil his Credit with his Tailor. Yes, he shall have my Niece with her Fortune, he shall.

Foib. He! I hope to see him lodge in *Ludgate* first, and angle into *Black-Friars* for Brass Farthings, with an old Mitten.

Lady. Ay dear *Foible*; thank thee for that, dear *Foible*. He has put me out of all Patience. I shall never recompense my Features, to receive Sir *Rowland* with any Economy

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mony of Face. This Wretch has fretted me that I am absolutely decay'd. Look, *Foible*.

Foib. Your Ladyship has frown'd a little too rashly, indeed, Madam. There are some Cracks discernible in the white Vernish.

Lady. Let me see the the Glas—Cracks, say'st thou? Why I am errantly flea'd—I look like an old peel'd Wall. Thou must repair me, *Foible*, before Sir Rowland comes; or I shall never keep up to my Picture.

Foib. I warrant you, Madam; a little Art once made your Picture like you; and now a little of the same Art must make you like your Picture. Your Picture must fit for you, Madam.

Lady. But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will a not fail when he does come? Will he be Importunate, *Foible*, and push? For if he shou'd not be importunate—I shall never break Decorums—I shall die with Confusion, if I am forc'd to advance—Oh no, I can never advance—I shall swoon if he should expect Advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a Lady to the Necessity of breaking her Forms, I won't be too coy neither.——I won't give him Despair——But a little Disdain is not amiss; a little Scorn is alluring.

Foib. A little Scorn becomes your Ladyship.

Lady. Yes, but Tenderneſs becomes me best——A sort of a Dyingneſs—You ſee that Picture has a ſort of a——Ha *Foible*? A Swimmingneſs in the Eyes—Yes, I'll look ſo—My Niece affects it; but ſhe wants Features. Is Sir Rowland handſom? Let my Toilet be remov'd—I'll dreſs above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handſom? Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be ſurpriz'd. I'll be taken by Surprize.

Foib. By Storm, Madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk Man.

Lady. Is he! O then he'll importune, if he's a brisk Man. I ſhall ſave Decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal Terror at the Apprehenſion of offending againſt Decorums. O I'm glad he's a brisk Man. Let my Things be remov'd, good *Foible*.

SCENE

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SCENE VI.

Mrs. Fainall, Foible.

Mrs. Fain. O *Foible*, I have been in a Fright, lest I should come too late. That Devil *Marwood*, saw you in the Park with *Mirabell*, and I'm afraid will discover it to my Lady.

Foib. Discover what, Madam?

Mrs. Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that strange Face; I am privy to the whole Design, and know that *Waitwell* to whom thou wert this Morning marry'd, is to personate *Mirabell's* Uncle, and as such, winning my Lady, to involve her in those Difficulties from which *Mirabell* only must release her, by his making his Conditions to have my Cousin and her Fortune left to her own Disposal.

Foib. O dear Madam, I beg your Pardon. It was not my Confidence in your Ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good Correspondence between your Ladyship and Mr. *Mirabell*, might have hinder'd his communicating this Secret.

Mrs. Fain. Dear *Foible*, forget that.

Foib. O dear Madam, Mr. *Mirabell* is such a sweet winning Gentleman— But your Ladyship is the Pattern of Generosity.—— Sweet Lady, to be so good! Mr. *Mirabell* cannot choose but be grateful. I find your Ladyship has his Heart still. Now, Madam, I can safely tell your Ladyship our Success, Mrs. *Marwood* had told my Lady; but I warrant I manag'd my self. I turn'd it all for the better. I told my Lady that Mr. *Mirabell* rail'd at her, I laid horrid Things to his Charge, I'll vow; and my Lady is so incens'd, that she'll be contracted to Sir *Rowland* to Night, she says;—— I warrant I work'd her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a *Welsh* Maidenhead.

Mrs. Fain. O rare *Foible*!

Foib. Madam, I beg your Ladyship to acquaint Mr. *Mirabell* of his Success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him—— besides, I believe Madam *Marwood* watches me.—— She has a Month's Mind; but I know Mr. *Mirabell* can't abide her.—— [*Calls*]
John—— remove my Lady's Toilet. Madam, your

Servant

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Servant. My Lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

Mrs. Fain. I'll go with you up the back Stairs, lest you should meet her.

S C E N E VII.

Mrs. Marwood alone.

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this Importance? Yes, I shall watch you. Why this Wench is the *Passe-par-toute*, a very Master-Key to every Body's strong Box. My Friend *Fainall*, have you carry'd it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems it's over with you. Your Loathing is not from a want of Appetite then, but from a Surfeit. Else you could never be so cool to fall from a Principal to be an Assistant; to procure for him! A Pattern of Generosity, that I confess. Well, Mr. *Fainall*, you have met with your Match.——O Man, Man! Woman, Woman! The Devil's an Ass: If I were a Painter, I would draw him like an Idiot, a Driveler with Bib and Bells. Man should have his Head and Horns, and Woman the rest of him. Poor simple Fiend! Madam *Marwood* has a Month's Mind but he can't abide her——'Twere better for him you had not been his Confessor in that Affair; without you could have kept his Counsel closer. I shall not prove another Pattern of Generosity——he has not oblig'd me to that with those Excesses of himself; and now I have none of him. Here comes the good Lady, panting ripe; with a Heart full of Hope, and a Head full of Care like any Chymist upon the Day of Projection.

S C E N E VIII.

[To her] *Lady Wishfort.*

Lady. O Dear *Marwood*, what shall I say for this rude Forgetfulness——But my dear Friend is all Goodness.

Mrs. Mar. No Apologies, dear Madam, I have been very well entertain'd.

Lady. As I'm a Person I am in a very Chaos to think I should so forget my self——But I have such an Olio of Affairs really I know not what to do——[Calls]——

Foible——I expect my Nephew Sir *Wilfull* ev'ry Mo-

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ment too:—Why *Foible*—He means to travel for Improvement.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks Sir *Willfull* shou'd rather think of marrying than travelling at his Year's. I hear he is turn'd of forty.

Lady. O he's in less Danger of being spoil'd by his Travels—I am against my Nephew's marrying too Young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquir'd Discretion to choose for himself.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks *Mrs. Millamant* and he wou'd make a very fit Match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a Thing very usual with young Gentlemen.

Lady. I promise you I have thought on't—And since 'tis your Judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your Judgment extremely. On my Word I'll propose it.

SCENE IX.

[To them] *Foible*.

Lady. Come, come, *Foible*—I had forgot my Nephew will be here before Dinner—I must make haste.

Foib. Mr. *Willwood* and Mr. *Petulant* are come to dine with your Ladyship.

Lady. O Dear, I can't appear 'till I am dress'd. Dear *Willwood* shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em. I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear Friend, excuse me.

SCENE X.

Mrs. Marwood, Mrs. Millamant, Mincing.

Milla. Sure never any thing was so unbred as that odious Man.—*Marwood*, your Servant.

Mrs. Mar. You have a Colour, what's the matter?

Milla. That horrid Fellow *Petulant* has provok'd me to a Flame—I have broke my Fan—*Mincing*, lend me yours; is not all the Powder out of my Hair?

Mrs. Mar. No. What has he done?

Milla. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talk'd—y, he has said nothing neither; but he has contradicted every Thing that has been said. For my part, I thought *Willwood* and he wou'd have quarrell'd.

C

Minc.

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Misc. I vow Mem. I thought once they wou'd have fit.

Milla. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing I swear, that one has not the Liberty of choosing ones Acquaintance as one does ones Clothes.

Mrs. Mar. If we had that Liberty, we shou'd be as weary of one Set of Acquaintance, tho' never so good, as we are of one Suit, tho' never so fine. A Fool and a *Doily* Stuff wou'd now and then find Days of Grace, and be worn for Variety.

Milla. I could consent to wear 'em, if they wou'd wear alike; but Fools never wear out——They are such *Drap-deberry* Things! Without one cou'd give 'em to ones Chamber-maid after a Day or two.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the Play-house? A fine gay glossy Fool shou'd be given there, like a new masking Habit, after the Masquerade is over, and we have done with the Disguis'. For a Fool's Visit is always a Disguise; and never admitted by a Woman of Wit, but to blind her Affair with a Lover of Sense. If you wou'd but appear barefac'd now, and own *Mirabell*; you might as easily put off *Petulant* and *Witwoud*, as your Hood and Searf. And indeed 'tis time, for the Town has found it: The Secret is grown too big for the Pretence. 'Tis like *Mrs. Primly's* great Belly; she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her Hips. Indeed, *Millamant*, you can no more conceal it, than my Lady *Sirammel* can her Face, that goodly Face, which in Defiance of her Rhenish-wine Tea, will not be comprehended in a Mask.

Milla. I'll take my Death, *Marwood*, you are more Cenforious than a decay'd Beauty, or a discarded Toast; *Mirroring*, tell the Men they may come up. My Aunt is not cressling here; their Folly is less provoking than your Malice.

SCENE XI.

Millamant, Marwood.

Milla. The Town has found it! What it has found That *Mirabell* loves me is no more a Secret, than it is Secret that you discover'd it to my Aunt, or than the Reason why you discover'd it is a Secret.

Mrs. Mar. You are nettled.

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Milla. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, my Dear, you'll tear another Fan, if you don't mitigate those violent Airs.

Milla. O silly! Ha, ha, ha. I cou'd laugh immoderately. Poor *Mirabell*! His Constancy to me has quite destroy'd his Complaisance for all the World beside. I swear, I never enjoin'd it him, to be so coy—— If I had the Vanity to think he wou'd obey me, I wou'd command him to shew more Galantry—— 'Tis hardly well bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own Way. Ha, ha, ha. Pardon me, dear Creature, I must laugh, ha, ha, ha. Tho' I grant you 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha.

Mrs. Mar. What pity 'tis so much fine Raillery, and deliver'd with so significant Gesture, shou'd be so unhappily directed to miscarry.

Milla. Hæ? Dear Creature, I ask your Pardon—— I swear I did not mind you.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. *Mirabell* and you both may think it a Thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you——

Milla. O dear, what? for it is the same thing, it I hear it—— Ha, ha, ha.

Mrs. Mar. That I detest him, hate him, Madam.

Milla. O Madam, why so do I—— And yet the Creature loves me, ha, ha, ha. How can one forbear laughing to think of it—— I am a Sibyl if I am not amaz'd to think what he can see in me. I'll take my Death, I think you are handsomer—— and within a Year or two as young—— If you cou'd but stay for me, I shou'd overtake you—— But that cannot be,—— Well, that Thought makes me melancholick,—— Now I'll be sad.

Mrs. Mar. Your merry Note may be chang'd sooner than you think.

Milla. D'ye say so? Then I'm resolv'd I'll have a Song to keep up my Spirits.

SCENE XII.

[To them] Mincing.

Mrs. Mar. The Gentlemen stay but to comb, Madam, and will wait on you?

C 2

Milla.

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Milla. Desire Mrs. ——— that is in the next Room to sing the Song I wou'd have learnt Yesterday. You shall hear it, Madam ——— Not that there's any great Matter in it ——— But 'tis agreeable to my Humour.

S O N G.

Set by Mr. John Eccles.

I.

Love's but the Frailty of the Mind,
When 'tis not with Ambition join'd;
A sickly Flame, which, if not fed, expires,
And feeding, wastes in Self-consuming Fires.

II.

'Tis not to wound a wanton Boy,
Or am'rous Youth, that gives the Joy;
But 'tis the Glory to have pierc'd a Swain,
For whom inferior Beauties sigh'd in vain.

III.

Then I alone the Conquest prize,
When I insult a Rival's Eyes:
If there's Delight in Love, 'tis when I see
That Heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.

S C E N E XIII.

[To them] *Petulant, Witwoud.*

Milla. Is your Animosity compos'd, Gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, Raillery, Madam; we have no Animosity—We hit off a little Wit now and then, but no Animosity—The Falling-out of Wits is like the Falling-out of Lovers——We agree in the main, like Treble and Base. Ha, *Petulant*?

Pet. Ay, in the main——But when I have a Humour to contradict——

Wit. Ay, when he has a Humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my Cue. Then we contradict one another like two Battle-dores: For Contradictions beget one another like *Jews*.

Pet. If he says Black's Black—if I have a Humour to say 'tis Blue——Let that pass——All's one for that. If I have a Humour to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must——But it may——It may.

Pet.

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Pet. Yes, it positively must, upon Proof positive.

Wit. Ay, upon Proof positive it must; but upon Proof presumptive it only may. That's a Logical Distinction now, Madam.

Mrs. Mar. I perceive your Debates are of Importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one Thing, and Learning's another; but a Debate's a Debate, that I assert.

Wit. *Petulant's* an Enemy to Learning; he relies altogether on his Parts.

Pet. No, I'm no Enemy to Learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs. Mar. That's a Sign indeed 'tis no Enemy to you.

Pet. No, no, 'tis no Enemy to any Body, but them that have it.

Milla. Well, an illiterate Man's my Aversion: I wonder at the Impudence of any illiterate Man, to offer to make Love.

Wit. That I confess I wonder at too.

Milla. Ah! to marry an Ignorant! that can hardly Read or Write.

Pet. Why shou'd a Man be any further from being marry'd tho' he can't read, than he is from being Hang'd. The Ordinary's paid for setting the *Psalm*, and the Parish-Priest for reading the Ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both Cases, a Man may do it without Book ——— So all's one for that.

Milla. D'ye hear the Creature? Lord, here's Company. I'll be gone.

SCENE XIV.

Sir Wilfull Witwoud in a riding Dress, Mrs. Marwood, Petulant, Witwoud, Footman.

Wit. In the Name of *Bartlemew* and his Fair, what have we here?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis your Brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I ——— Yes, I think it is he ——— I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.

Foot. Sir, my Lady's dressing. Here's Company; if you please to walk in, in the mean time.

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Sir Wil. Dressing! What, 'tis but Morning here I warrant with you in *London*; we shou'd count it towards Afternoon in our Parts, down in *Shropshire*—— Why then belike my Aunt han't din'd yet—— Ha, Friend?

Foot. Your Aunt, Sir?

Sir Wil. My Aunt, Sir; yes my Aunt, Sir, and your Lady, Sir; your Lady is my Aunt, Sir—— Why, what dost thou not know me, Friend? Why then send some Body hither that does. How long hast thou liv'd with thy Lady, Fellow, ha?

Foot. A Week, Sir; longer than any Body in the House, except my Lady's Woman.

Sir Wil. Why then belike thou dost not know thy Lady, if thou see'st her, ha, Friend?

Foot. Why truly, Sir, I cannot safely swear to her Face in a Morning, before she is dress'd. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd Guess at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, prithee try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, enquire her out, dost hear, Fellow? And tell her, her Nephew, *Sir Wilfull Witwoud*, is in the House.

Foot. I shall, Sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye, hear me, Friend; a Word with you in your Ear; prithee who are these Galants?

Foot. Really, Sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all.

SCENE XV.

Sir Wilfull Witwoud, *Petulant*, *Witwoud*, *Mrs. Marwood*.

Sir Wil. Oons this Fellow knows less than a Starling; I don't think a'knows his own Name.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. *Witwoud*, your Brother is not behind-hand in Forgetfulness—— I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope so—— The Devil take him that remembers first, I say,

Sir Wil. Save you, Gentlemen and Lady.

Mrs. Mar. For Shame, Mr. *Witwoud*; why won't you speak to him?—— And you, Sir.

Wit. *Petulant*, speak,

Pet. And you, Sir.

Sir Wil.

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Sir Wil. No Offence, I hope. [Salutes Marwood.

Mrs. Mar. No sure, Sir.

Wis. This is a vile Dog, I see that already. No Offence! Ha, ha, ha, to him; to him, *Petulant*, smoke him.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a Journey, Sir; hem, hem. [Surveying him round.

Sir Wil. Very likely, Sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No Offence, I hope, Sir.

Wis. Smoke the Boots, the Boots; *Petulant*, the Boots; Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Wil. May be not, Sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, Sir.

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the Information of your Boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, Sir: If you are not satisfy'd with the Information of my Boots, Sir, if you will step to the Stable, you may enquire further of my Horse, Sir.

Pet. Your Horse, Sir! Your Horse is an Ass, Sir!

Sir Wil. Do you speak by way of Offence, Sir?

Mrs. Mar. The Gentleman's merry, that's all, Sir — S'life, we shall have a Quarrel betwixt an Horse and an Ass, before they find one another out. You must not take any thing amiss from your Friends, Sir. You are among your Friends here, tho' it may be you don't know it — If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Right, Lady; I am Sir Wilful Witwoud, so I write my self; no Offence to any Body, I hope; and Nephew to the Lady *Wishfort* of this Mansion.

Mrs. Mar. Don't you know this Gentleman, Sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! What, sure 'tis not — Yea by'r Lady, but 'tis — 'Sheart I know not whether 'tis or no — Yea but 'tis, by the *Rekin*, Brother *Antony*! What Tony, 'faith! What dost thou not know me? By'r Lady nor I thee, thou art so Becravated, and so Beperiwig'd — 'Sheart why dost not speak? Art thou o'erjoy'd?

Wis. Odsso Brother, is it you? Your Servant, Brother.

Sir Wil. Your Servant! Why yours, Sir. Your Servant again — 'Sheart, and your Friend and Servant to that — And a — (*puff*) and a Flap Dragon for your Service, Sir: And a Hire's Foot, and a Hare's Scut for your service, Sir; an you be so cold and so courtly!

Wis. No Offence, I hope, Brother.

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Sir *Wil. Sheart*, Sir, but there is, and much Offence--A Pox, is this your Inns o' Court Breeding, not to know your Friends and your Relations, your Elders, and your Betters?

Wit. Why, Brother *Wilfull of Salop*, you may be as short as a *Shrewbury Cake*, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know Relations in Town. You think you're in the Country, where great lubberly Brothers flabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a Call of Serjeants--'Tis not the Fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear Brother.

Sir *Will* The Fashion's a Fool; and you're a Fop, dear Brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this--By'r Lady I conjectur'd you were a Fop, since you began to change the Stile of your Letters, and write in a scrap of Paper gilt round the Edges, no bigger than a *Subtana*. I might expect this when you left off, Honour'd Brother; and hoping you are in good Health, and so forth--To begin with a Rat me, Knight, I'm so sick of a last Night's Debauch--O'ds Heart, and then tell a familiar Tale of a Cock and a Bull, and a Whore and a Bottle, and so conclude--You cou'd write News before you were out of your Time, when you liv'd with honest *Pumple-Nose* the Attorney of *Furnival's Inn*--You cou'd intreat to be remember'd then to your Friends round the *Rekin*. We could have Gazettes then, and *Dawks's Letter*, and the *Weekly Bill*, 'till of late Days.

Pet. 'Slife, *Witwoud*, were you ever an Attorney's Clerk? Of the Family of the *Furnivals*. Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Ay, ay, but that was but for a while. Not long, not long; pshaw, I was not in my own Power then. An Orphan, and this Fellow was my Guardian; ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that Man to come to *London*. He had the Disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound Prentice to a Felt-maker in *Shrewsbury*; this Fellow would have bound me to a Maker of Felts.

Sir *Will.* 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a Maker of Fops; where, I suppose, you have serv'd your Time; and now you may set up for your self.

Mrs. Mar. You intend to Travel, Sir, as I'm inform'd.

Sir *Wil.* Belike I may, Madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt Seas, if my Mind hold.

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Pet. And the Wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask License of you, Sir; nor the Weather-Cock your Companion. I direct my Discourse to the Lady, Sir; 'Tis like my Aunt may have told you, Madam——Yes, I have settl'd my Concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see Foreign Parts. If an how that the Peace holds, whereby that is Taxes abate.

Mrs. Mar. I thought you had design'd for *France* at all Adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a Resolution,——because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand still I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: But I have Thoughts to tarry a small matter in Town, to learn o me what of your *Lingo* first, before I cross the Seas. I'd gladly have a Spice of your *French* as they say, whereby to hold Discourse in Foreign Countries.

Mrs. Mar. Here's an Academy in Town for that use.

Sir Wil. There is? 'Tis like there may.

Mrs. Mar. No doubt you will return very much improv'd.

Wit. Yes, refin'd like a *Dutch* Skipper from a Whale-fishing.

S C E N E XVI.

[To them] *Lady Wishfort and Fainall.*

Lady. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your Servant.

Fain. Sir *Wilfull*, your most faithful Servant.

Sir Wil. Cousin *Fainall*, give me your Hand.

Lady. Cousin *Witwoud*, your Servant; Mr. *Petulant*, your Servant——Nephew, you are welcome again Will you drink any Thing after your Journey, Nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wil. I'm very well I thank you, Aunt——However, I thank you for your courteous Offer. 'Sheart I was afraid you wou'd have been in the Fashion too, and have remember'd to have forgot your Relations. Here's your Cousin *Tony*, belike, I mayn't call him Brother for fear of Offence.

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Lady. O he's a Rallier, Nephew—My Cousin's a Wit: And your great Wits always rally their best Friends to choose. When you have been Abroad, Nephew, you'll understand Raillery better.

[*Fain. and Mrs. Marwood talk apart.*]

Sir Wil. Why then let him hold his Tongue in the mean Time; and rail when that Day comes.

S C E N E XVII.

[*To them*] Mincing.

Mine. Mem. I come to acquaint your Laship that Dinner is impatient.

Sir Wil. Impatient? Why then belike it won't stay 'till I pull off my Boots. Sweet-heart, can you help me to a pair of Slippers?—My Man's with his Horses, I warrant.

Lady. Fy, fy, Nephew, you wou'd not pull off your Boots here—Go down into the Hall—Dinner shall stay for you—My Nephew's a little unbred, you'll pardon him, Madam,—Gentlemen, will you walk? *Marwood?*

Mrs. Mar. I'll follow you, Madam,—Before *Sir Wilful* is ready.

S C E N E XVIII.

Marwood, Fainall.

Fain. Why then *Foible's* a Bawd, an Errant, Rank, Match-making Bawd. And I it seems am a Husband, a Rank-Husband; and my Wife a very Errant, Rank-Wife,—all in the Way of the World. 'Sdeath to be a Cuckold by Anticipation, a Cuckold in Embrio? Sure I was born with budding Antlers like a young Satyr, or a Citizen's Child. 'Sdeath to be Out-witted, to be Out-jilted—Out-Matrimony'd,—If I had kept my Speed like a Stag, 'twere somewhat—but to crawl after, with my Horns like a Snail, and be out-stripp'd by my Wife—'tis scurvy Wedlock.

Mrs. Mar. Then shake it off, you have often wish'd for an Opportunity to part;—and now you have it. But first prevent their Plot,——the half of *Millamant's* Fortune is too considerable to be parted with, to a Foe, to *Mirabell*.

Fain

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Fain. Dam him, that had been mine ——— had you not made that fond Discovery ——— That had been forfeited, had they been Married. My Wife had added Lustre to my Horns, by that Increase of Fortune, I cou'd have worn 'em tipt with Gold, tho' my Forehead had been furnish'd like a Deputy-Lieutenant's Hall.

Mrs. Mar. They may prove a Cap of Maintenance to you still, if you can away with your Wife. And she's no worse than when you had her ——— I dare swear she had given up her Game, before she was Marry'd.

Fain. Hum! That may be ———

Mrs. Mar. You Married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected; why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The Means, the Means.

Mrs. Mar. Discover to my Lady your Wife's Conduct; threaten to part with her ——— My Lady loves her, and will come to any Composition to save her Reputation. Take the Opportunity of breaking it, just upon the Discovery of this Imposture. My Lady will be enrag'd beyond Bounds, and sacrifice Niece, and Fortune, and all at that Conjunction. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she shou'd flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. Faith this has an Appearance.

Mrs. Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my Lady to endeavour a Match between *Millamant* and *Sir Wilsul*, that may be an Obstacle.

Fain. O for that matter leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that, he will drink like a *Dane*: After Dinner, I'll set his Hand in.

Mrs. Mar. Well, how do you stand affected towards your Lady?

Fain. Why faith I'm thinking of it. — Let me see — I am Marry'd already; so that's over — My Wife has plaid the Jade with me — Well, that's over too — I never lov'd her, or if I had, why that wou'd have been over too by this time — Jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of Jealousy. Weary of her, I am and shall be — No, there's no end of that; No, no, that

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that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my Repose. Now for my Reputation, — As to my own, I Marry'd not for it; so that's out of the Question. — And as to my Part in my Wife's — Why she had parted with hers before; so bringing none to me, she can take none from me; 'tis against all rule of Play, that I should lose to one, who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mrs. Mar. Besides you forget, Marriage is honourable.

Fain. Hum! Faith and that's well thought on; Marriage is honourable, as you say; and if so, wherefore should Cuckoldom be a Discredit, being deriv'd from so honourable a Root?

Mrs. Mar. Nay I know not; if the Root be honourable, why not the Branches?

Fain. So, so, why this Point's clear. — Well, how do we proceed?

Mrs. Mar. I will contrive a Letter which shall be deliver'd to my Lady at the time when that Rascal who is to act Sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown Hand — for the less I appear to know of the Truth, the better I can play the Incendiary. Besides, I wou'd not have *Foible* provok'd if I could help it, — because you know she knows some Passages — Nay I expect all will come out — But let the Mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discover'd.

Fain. If the worst come to the worst, — I'll turn my Wife to Grass — I have already a Deed of Settlement of the best Part of her Estate; which I wheedl'd out of her; and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs. Mar. I hope you are convinc'd that I hate *Mirabell* now: You'll be no more Jealous?

Fain. Jealous, no, — by this Kiss — let Husbands be Jealous; but let the Lover still believe: Or if he doubt, let it be only to endear his Pleasure, and prepare the Joy that follows, when he proves his Mistress true. But let Husbands Doubts convert to endless jealousy; or if they have Belief, let it corrupt to Superstition, and blind Credulity. I am single, and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the Badge, but I'll disown the Order. And since I take my Leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common Motto to their common Crest.

All

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*All Husbands must, or Pain, or Shame, endure;
The Wife too jealous are, Fools too secure.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

[SCENE Continues.]

Lady Withfort and Foible.

Lady. **I** S Sir Rowland coming say'st thou, *Foible?* and are things in Order?

Foib. Yes, Madam. I have put Wax-Lights in the Sconces; and plac'd the Footmen in a Row in the Hall, in their best Liveries, with the Coachman and Postilion to fill up the Equipage.

Lady. Have you pullvill'd the Coachman and Postilion, that they may not stink of the Stable, when Sir Rowland comes by?

Foib. Yes, Madam.

Lady. And are the Dancers and the Musick ready, that he may be entertain'd in all Points with Correspondence to his Passion?

Foib. All is ready, Madam.

Lady. And — well — and how do I look, *Foible?*

Foib. Most killing well, Madam.

Lady. Well, and how shall I receive him? In what Figure shall I give his Heart the first Impression? There is a great deal in the first Impression. Shall I sit? — No, I won't sit — I'll walk — ay I'll walk from the Door upon his Entrance; and then turn full upon him — No, that will be too sudden. I'll lie — ay, I'll lie down — I'll receive him in my little Dressing-Room, there's a Couch — Yes, yes, I'll give the first Impression on a Couch — I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one Elbow; with one Foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way — Yes — and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surpriz'd, and rise to meet him in a pretty Disorder — Yes — O, nothing is more alluring than a Levée from a Couch in some Confusion — It shews the Foot to advantage, and furnishes with Blushes, and recomposing Airs beyond Comparison. Hark! There's a Coach.

Foib. 'Tis he, Madam.

Lady.

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Lady. O dear, has my Nephew made his Addressee to *Millamant*? I order'd him.

Foib. Sir *Wilfull* is set in to Drinking, Madam, in the Parlour.

Lady. Ods my Life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, *Foible*; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go—When they are together, then come to me, *Foible*, that I may not be too long alone with Sir *Rowland*.

SCENE II.

Mrs. Millamant, Mrs. Fainall, Foible.

Foib. Madam, I stay'd here, to tell your Ladyship that Mr. *Mirabell* has waited this half Hour for an Opportunity to talk with you. Tho' my Lady's Orders were to leave you and Sir *Wilfull* together. Shall I tell Mr. *Mirabell* that you are at leisure?

Milla. No——What wou'd the dear Man have? I am thoughtful, and wou'd amuse my self, — bid him come another time.

*There never yet was Woman made,
Nor shall, but to be curs'd.*

[Repeating and walking about.

That's hard!

Mrs. Fain. You are very fond of Sir *John Suckling* to day, *Millamant*, and the Poets.

Milla. He? Ay, and filthy Verses—— So I am.

Foib. Sir *Wilfull* is coming, Madam. Shall I send Mr. *Mirabell* away?

Milla. Ay, if you please, *Foible*, send him away, — Or send him hither, — just as you will, dear *Foible*. — I think I'll see him — Shall I? Ay, let the Wretch come. *Thyrsis, a Youth of the Inspir'd Train.*

[Repeating.

Dear *Fainall*, entertain Sir *Wilfull* — Thou hast Philosophy to undergo a Fool, thou art marry'd and hast Patience — I would confer with my own Thoughts.

Mrs. Fain. I am oblig'd to you, that you would make me your Proxy in this Affair; but I have Business of my own.

SCENE

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SCENE III.

[To them.] Sir Wilfull.

Mrs. Fain. O Sir Wilfull, you are come at the Critical Instant. There's your Mistress up to the Ears in Love and Contemplation, pursue your Point, now or never.

Sir Wil. Yes; my Aunt will have it so, — I would gladly have been encourag'd with a Bottle or two, because I'm somewhat } *This while Milla. walks about Re- wary at first, before I am acquainted; peating to her self.* — But I hope, after a time, I shall break my Mind — that is upon further Acquaintance — So for the present, Cousin, I'll take my leave — If so be you'll be so kind to make my Excuse, I'll return to my Company —

Mrs. Fain. O fy, Sir Wilfull! What, you must not be daunted.

Sir Wil. Daunted, no, that's not it, it is not so much for that — for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient 'till further Acquaintance, that's all — your Servant.

Mrs. Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an Opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the Door.

SCENE IV.

Sir Wilfull, Millamant.

Sir Wil. Nay, nay Cousin, — I have forgot my Gloves, — What d'ye do? 'Sheart a'has lock'd the Door indeed, I think — Nay, Cousin Fainall, open the Door — Phaw, what a Vixon Trick is this? — Nay, now a'has seen me too — Cousin, I made bold to pass thro' as it were — I think this Door's enchanted —

Milla. [Repeating]

I prithee spare me, gentle Boy,

Press me no more for that slight Toy.

Sir Wil. Anan? Cousin, your Servant.

Milla. — *That foolish Trifle of a Heart* — Sir Wilfull!

Sir Wil. Yes — your Servant. No Offence I hope, Cousin.

Milla. [Repeating]

I swear it will not do us Part,

Tho' thou dost thine, employ'st thy Power and Art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir

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Sir Wil. Anan? *Suckling*? No such Suckling neither; Cousin, nor Stripling: I thank Heav'n, I'm no Minor.

Milla. Ah Rustick, ruder than *Gotbick*.

Sir Wil. Well, well, I shall understand your *Lingo* one of these Days, Cousin, in the mean while I must answer in plain *English*.

Milla. Have you any Business with me, *Sir Wilfull*?

Sir Wil. Not at present, Cousin, — Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were dispos'd to fetch a Walk this Evening, if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have fought a Walk with you.

Milla. A Walk? What then?

Sir Wil. Nay nothing — Only for the Walk's sake, that's all —

Milla. I nauseate Walking; 'tis a Country Diversion, I lothe the Country and every thing that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may — Here are choice of Pastimes here in Town, as Plays and the like, that must be confess'd indeed. —

Milla. Ah *Petourdie*! I hate the Town too.

Sir Wil. Dear Heart, that's much — Hah! that you should hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the Town, and others can't away with the Country, — 'tis like you may be one of those, Cousin.

Milla. Ha, ha, ha. Yes, 'tis like I may. — You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wil. Not at present, Cousin. — 'Tis like when I have an Opportunity to be more private, — I may break my Mind in some measure — I conjecture you partly guess — However that's as time shall try, — But spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

Milla. If it is of no great Importance, *Sir Wilfull*, you will oblige me to leave me: I have just now a little Business. —

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, Cousin: Yes, yes, all a case — When you're dispos'd, when you're dispos'd. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that, — Yes, yes, if your Concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold as they say — Cousin, your Servant. — I think this Door's lock'd.

Milla. You may go this way, *Sir*.

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Sir *Will.* Your Servant, then with your leave I'll return to my Company.

Milla. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha.

Like Phoebus sung the no less am'rous Boy.

S C E N E V.

Millamant, Mirabell.

Mira.— *Like Daphne she, as Lovely and as Coy.*

Do you lock your self up from me, to make my Search more curious? Or is this pretty Artifice contriv'd, to signify that here the Chace must end, and my Pursuit be crown'd, for you can fly no further? —

Milla. Vanity! No—— I'll fly and be follow'd to the last Moment, tho' I am upon the very Verge of Matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the Grate of a Monastery, with one Foot over the Threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay and afterwards.

Mira. What, after the last?

Milla. O, I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduc'd to an inglorious Ease; and freed from the agreeable Fatigues of Solicitation.

Mira. But do not you know, that when Favours are conferr'd upon instant and tedious Solicitation, that they diminish in their Value, and that both the Giver loses the Grace, and the Receiver lessens his Pleasure?

Milla. It may be in Things of common Application; but never sure in Love. O, I hate a Lover that can dare to think he draws a Moment's Air, independent on the Bounty of his Mistress. There is not so impudent a Thing in Nature, as the saucy Look of an assured Man, confident of Success. The Pedantick Arrogance of a very Husband, has not so Pragmatical an Air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my Will and Pleasure.

Mira. Won'd you have 'em both before Marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other 'till after Grace?

Milla. Ah! don't be impertinent—— My dear Liberty, shall I leave thee? my faithful Solitude, my darling Contemplation, must I bid you then Adieu? Ay-h. adieu.

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adieu— My Morning Thoughts, agreeable Wakings, indolent Slumbers, all ye *Douceurs*, ye *Someils du Matin*, adieu. — I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible ——— Positively, *Mirabell*, I'll lie a-bed in a Morning as long as I please.

Mira. Then I'll get up in a Morning as early as I please.

Milla. Ah! idle Creature, get up when you will— And d'ye hear, I won't be call'd Names after I'm marry'd; positively I won't be call'd Names.

Mira. Names!

Milla. Ay, as Wife, Spouse, my Dear, Joy, Jewel, Love, Sweet-heart, and the rest of that nauseous Cant, in which Men and their Wives are so sulsomly familiar,— I shall never bear that—— Good *Mirabell*, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before Folks, like my Lady *Fadler* and Sir *Francis*: Nor go to *Hide-Park* together the first *Sunday* in a new Chariot, to provoke Eyes and Whispers, and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first Week, and asham'd of one another ever after. Let us never Visit together, nor go to a Play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: Let us be as strange as if we had been marry'd a great while; and as well-bred as if we were not marry'd at all.

Mira. Have you any more Conditions to offer? Hitherto your Demands are pretty reasonable.

Milla. Trifles,—As Liberty to pay and receive Visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive Letters, without Interrogatories or wry Faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose Conversation with regard only to my own Taste; to have no Obligation upon me to converse with Wits that I don't like, because they are your Acquaintance; or to be intimate with Fools, because they may be your Relations. Come to Dinner when I please; dine in my Dressing-room when I'm out of Humour, without giving a Reason. To have my Closet inviolate; to be sole Empress of my Tea Table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And, lastly, where-ever I am, you shall always knock at the Door before you come in. These Articles subscrib'd, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a Wife. *Mira*.

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Mira. Your Bill of Fare is something advanc'd in this latter Account. Well, have I Liberty to offer Conditions—— That when you are dwindled into a Wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarg'd into a Husband.

Milla. You have free Leave; propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

Mira. I thank you. *Inprimis* then, I covenant that your Acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn Confident, or Intimate of your own Sex; no the Friend to skreen her Affairs under your Countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual Secrecy. No Decoy-duck to wheedle you a *fop-scrambling* to the Play in a Mask—— Then bring you home in a pretended Fright, when you think you shall be found out—— And rail at me for missing the Play, and disappointing the Frolick which you had to pick me up and prove my Constancy.

Milla. Detestable *Imprimis*! I go to the Play in a Mask!

Mira. *Item*, I article that you continue to like your own Face, as long as I shall: And while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all Vizards for the Day, I prohibit all Masks for the Night, made of Oil'd-skins, and I know not what—— Hog's Bones, Hare's Gall, Pig Water, and the Marrow of a roasted Cat. In short, I forbid all Commerce with the Gentlewoman in *what-d'ye-call-it* Court. *Item*, I shut my Doors against all Bawds with Baskets, and Penny-worths of *Muslin, China, Fans, Atlasses, &c.*—— *Item*, when you shall be Breeding——

Milla. Ah! name it nor.

Mira. Which may be presum'd with a Blessing on our Endeavours——

Milla. Odious Endeavours!

Mira. I denounce against all strait Lacing, squeezing for a Shape, 'till you mould my Boy's Head like a Sugar-loaf; and instead of a Man-child, make me Father to a Crooked-biller. Lastly, to the Dominion of the *Tea Table* I submit.—— But with *proviso*, that you exceed not in your Province; but restrain your self to native and simple *Tea Table* Drinks, as *Tea, Chocolate, and Coffee*. As likewise to genuine and authoriz'd *Tea Table* Talk—— Such as mending of Fashions, spoiling Reputations, rail-
ing

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ing at absent Friends, and so forth—— But that on no Account you encroach upon the Mens Prerogative, and presume to drink Healths, or toast Fellows; for prevention of which I banish all *Foreign Forces*, all *Auxiliaries* to the *Tea Table*, as *Orange Brandy*, all *Aniseed*, *Cinnamon*, *Citron* and *Barbadoes-Waters*, together with *Ratafia*, and the most noble Spirit of *Clary*.—— But for *Couflip-Wine*, *Poppy-Water*, and all *Dormitives*, those I allow.—— These *Proviso's* admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying Husband.

Milla. O horrid *Proviso's*! filthy Strong-waters! I toast Fellows! Odious Men! I hate your odious *Proviso's*.

Mira. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your Hand upon the Contract? And here comes one to be a Witness to the Sealing of the Deed.

SCENE VI.

[To them] *Mrs. Fainall*.

Milla. *Fainall*, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs. Fain. Ay, ay, take him, take him, what should you do?

Milla. Well then—— I'll take my Death I'm in a horrid Fright—— *Fainall*, I shall never say it—— Well—— I think—— I'll endure you.

Mrs. Fain. Fy, fy, have him, have him, and tell him so in plain Terms: For I am sure you have a mind to him.

Milla. Are you? I think I have—— and the horrid Man looks as if he thought so too—— Well, you ridiculous Thing you, I'll have you—— I won't be kiss'd, nor I won't be thank'd—— Here, kiss my Hand tho'—— So, hold your Tongue now, don't say a Word.

Mrs. Fain. *Mirabell*, there's a Necessity for your Obedience;—— You have neither Time to talk nor stay. My Mother is coming; and in my Conscience if she shou'd see you, wou'd fall into Fits, and may be not recover time enough to return to Sir *Rowland*, who, as *Ecible* tells me, is in a fair Way to succeed. Therefore spare your Extasies for another Occasion, and slip down the

the Back
Milla
have said
Mira.

Mrs.
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Milla
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violently
Mrs.

to you.
with Sir
Milla
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Mrs.
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Milla
Wit.
could n
at one

Wit.

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the Back Stairs, where *Foible* waits to consult you.

Milla. Ay, go, go. In the mean Time I suppose you have said something to please me.

Mira. I am all Obedience.

SCENE VII.

Millamant, *Mrs. Fainall*.

Mrs. Fain. Yonder Sir *Wilfull*'s drunk, and so noisy that my Mother has been forc'd to leave Sir *Rowland* to appease him; but he answers her only with Singing and Drinking— What they may have done by this Time I know not; but *Petulant* and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Milla. Well, if *Mirabell* shou'd not make a good Husband, I am a lost Thing; ——— for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. Fain. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you. ——— If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir *Wilfull*.

Milla. How can you name that superannuated Lubber? Foh!

SCENE VIII.

[*To them*] *Witwoud* from drinking.

Mrs. Fain. So, is the Fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Wit. Left 'em? I cou'd stay no longer ——— I have laugh'd like ten Christnings ——— I am tipsy with Laughing ——— If I had staid any longer I shou'd have burst, — I must have been let out and piec'd in the Sides like an unfix'd Camlet — Yes, yes, the Fray is compos'd; my Lady came in like a *Noli prosequi*, and stopp'd the Proceedings.

Milla. What was the Dispute?

Wit. That's the Jest; there was no Dispute. They cou'd neither of 'em speak for Rage, and so fell a spitting at one another like two roasting Apples.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] *Petulant* drunk.

Wit. Now, *Petulant*, all's over, all's well. Gad my Head

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Head begins to whim it about—— Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a Fish.

Pet. Look you, *Mrs. Millamant*—— if you can love me, dear Nymph—— say it—— and that's the Conclusion—— Pass on, or pass off,—— that's all.

Wit. Thou hast utter'd *Volumes, Folio's*, in less than *Decimo Sexto*, my dear *Lacedemonian*. *Sirrah, Petulant*, thou art an Epitomizer of Words.

Pet. Witwoud—— You are an Annihilator of Sense.

Wit. Thou art a Retailer of Phrases; and dost deal in Remnants of Remnants, like a Maker of Pincushions—— Thou art in Truth (metaphorically speaking) a Speaker of Short-hand.

Pet. Thou art (without a Figure) just one half of an Ass, and *Baldwin* yonder, thy half Brother, is the rest.—— A *Gemini* of Asses split wou'd make just four of you.

Wit. Thou dost bite, my dear Mustard-seed; kiss me for that.

Pet. Stand off—— I'll kiss no more Males.—— I have kiss'd your *Twin* yonder in a Humour of Reconciliation, 'till he (*hiccup*) rises upon my Stomach like a Radish.

Milla. Eh! filthy Creature—— What was the Quarrel?

Pet. There was no Quarrel—— There might have been a Quarrel.

Wit. If there had been Words enow between 'em to have express'd Provocation, they had gone together by the Ears like a Pair of Castanets.

Pet. You were the Quarrel.

Milla. Me!

Pet. If I have a Humour to quarrel, I can make less Matters conclude Premises,—— If you are not hand-som, what then; if I have a Humour to prove it? If I shall have my Reward, say so; if not, fight for your Face the next Time your self—— I'll go sleep.

Wit. Do, wrap thy self up like a *Wood-louse*, and dream Revenge—— And hear me, if thou canst learn to write by To-morrow Morning, pen me a Challenge—— I'll carry it for thee.

Pet. Carry your Mistress's *Monkey a Spider*—— go flea Dogs, and read Romances—— I'll go to Bed to my Maid.

Mrs. Fain.

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Mrs. Fain. He's horridly drunk—— How came you all in this Pickle?

Wit. A Plot, a Plot, to get rid of the Knight,—— Your Husband's Advice; but he sneak'd off.

SCENE X.

Sir Wilfull drunk, Lady Wishfort, Witwoud, Millamant, Mrs. Fainall.

Lady. Out upon't, out upon't, at Years of Discretion, and comport your self at this Rantipole Rate.

Sir Wil. No Offence, Aunt.

Lady. Offence? As I'm a Person, I'm ashamed of you— Fought how you stink of Wine! D'ye think my Niece will ever endure such a *Borachio*! you're an absolute *Borachio*.

Sir Wil. Borachio!

Lady. At a time when you shou'd commence an Amour, and put your best Foot foremost——

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, an you grutch me your Liquor, make a Bill—— Give me more Drink, and take my Purse.

Sings.

Pry'thee fill me the Glafs

'Till it laugh in my Face,

With Ale that is Potent and Mellow;

He that rhines for a Las

Is an ignorant Ass,

For a Bumper has not its Fellow.

But if you wou'd have me marry my Cousin,—— Say the Word, and I'll do't—— *Wilfull* will do't, that's the Word—— *Wilfull* will do't, that's my Crest—— my Motto I have forgot.

Lady. My Nephew's a little overtaken, Cousin—— but 'tis with drinking your Health—— O' my Word you are oblig'd to him.

Sir Wil. *In vino veritas*, Aunt:—— If I drunk your Health To-day, Cousin—— I am a *Borachio*. But if you have a mind to be marry'd, say the Word, and send for the Piper; *Wilfull* will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other Round—— *Tony*, Ods heart where's *Tony*?—— *Tony's* an honest Fellow; but he spits after a Bumper, and that's a Fault.

Sings

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Sings. *We'll drink and we'll never have done, Boys,
Put the Glass then around with the Sun, Boys,
Let Apollo's Example invite us;
For he's drunk ev'ry Night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next Morning to light us.*

The Sun's a good Pimple, an honest Soaker; he has a Cellar at your *Antipodes*. If I travel, Aunt, I touch at your *Antipodes*—Your *Antipodes* are a good rascally sort of topsy turvy Fellows—If I had a Bumper, I'd stand upon my Head and drink a Health to 'em—A Match or no Match, Cousin, with the hard Name—Aunt, *Wifull* will do't. If she has her Maidenhead, let her look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own Counsel in the mean time, and cry out at the Nine Months End.

Milla. Your Pardon, Madam, I can stay no longer—*Sir Wifull* grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, Cousin.

SCENE XI.

Lady Wishfort, Sir Wifull Witwoud, Mr. Witwoud, Foible.

Lady. Smells! he would poison a Tallow-chandler and his Family. Beastly Creature, I know not what to do with him—Travel quoth-a; ay, travel, travel, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the *Saracens*, or the *Tartars*, or the *Turks*—for thou art not fit to live in a Christian Commonwealth, thou beastly Pagan.

Sir Wil. *Turks*, no; no *Turks*, Aunt: Your *Turks* are Infidels, and believe not in the Grape. Your *Mahometan*, your *Mussulman* is a dry Stinkard—No Offence, Aunt. My Map says that your *Turk* is not so honest a Man as your Christian— I cannot find by the Map that your *Musti* is Orthodox—Whereby it is a plain Case, that Orthodox is a hard Word, Aunt, and (*hiccup*) Greek for Claret.

Sings. *To drink is a Christian Diversion,
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:
Let Mahometan Fools
Live by Heathenish Rules,*

And

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And be damn'd over Tea-cups and Coffee.

But let British Lads sing,

Crown a Health to the King,

And a Fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

Ah, Tony!

[Foible whispers Lady Wishfort.

Lady. Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly Tumbril?—Go lie down and sleep, you Sot—Or as I'm a Person, I'll have you bastinado'd with Broom-sticks. Call up the Wenches with Broom-sticks.

Sir Wil. Ahey! Wenches, where are the Wenches?

Lady. Dear Cousin *Wimond*, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an Affair of Moment that invades me with some Precipitation—You will oblige me to all Futurity.

Wit. Come, Knight—Pox on him, I don't know what to say to him—Will you go to a Cock-match?

Sir Wil. With a Wench, Tony? Is she a Shake-bag, Sirrah? Let me bite your Cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! he has a Breath like a Bagpipe—Ay, ay, come, will you march, my *Salopian*?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my *Anthony*, my *Tantrony*. Sirrah, thou shalt be my *Tantrony*, and I'll be thy Pig.

—And a Fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

Lady. This will never do. It will never make a Match:

—At least before he has been abroad.

SCENE XII.

Lady Wishfort, *Waitwell* disguis'd as for Sir Rowland.

Lady. Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with Confusion at the Retrospection of my own Rudeness,—I have more Pardons to ask than the Pope distributes in the Year of Jubile. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an Alliance, we may unbend the Severity of Decorum—and dispense with a little Ceremony.

Wait. My Impatience, Madam, is the Effect of my Transport;—and 'till I have the Possession of your adorable Person, I am tantaliz'd on the Rack; and do but hang, Madam, on the Tenter of Expectation.

Lady. You have Excess of Galantry, Sir Rowland; and

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press things to a Conclusion with a most prevailing Vehemence.— But a Day or two for Decency of Marriage.—

Wait. For Decency of Funeral, Madam. The Delay will break my Heart——— or, if that shou'd fail, I shall be poison'd. My Nephew will get an inkling of my Designs, and poison me,—and I wou'd willingly starve him before I die— I wou'd gladly go out of the World with that Satisfaction.——— That wou'd be some Comfort to me, if I cou'd but live so long as to be reveng'd on that unnatural Viper.

Lady. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly I wou'd contribute much both to the saving of your Life, and the accomplishment of your Revenge——— Not that I respect my self; tho' he has been a perfidious Wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady. O Sir Rowland, the Hours that he has died away at my Feet, the Tears that he has shed, the Oaths that he has sworn, the Palpitations that he has felt, the Trances and the Tremblings, the Ardors and the Ecstasies, the Kneelings and the Risings, the Heart-heavings and the Hand-gripings, the Pangs and the Pathetick Regards of his protesting Eyes! Oh no Memory can register.

Wait. What, my Rival! Is the Rebel my Rival? a' dies.

Lady. No, don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland, starve him gradually inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do'r. In three Weeks he shall be bare-foot; in a Month out at Knees with begging an Alms——— He shall starve upward and upward 'till he has nothing living but his Head, and then go out in a Stink like a Candle's End upon a Saveall.

Lady. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way,——— You are no Novice in the Labyrinth of Love— You have the Clue——— But as I am a Person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my Yielding to any Sinister Appetite, or Indigestion of Widowhood; nor impute my Complacency to any Lethargy of Continence——— I hope you do not think me prone to any Iteration of Nuptials.—

Wait. Far be it from me———

Lady. If you do, I protest I must recede——— or think

that
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La

Foib
with a
Lady
favour
a Person
Sir Row

Wait.
Spouse,
Foib.
a Quart
Lady?
Wait.
wilt fare
Iteration
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than act

Lady.
you. ple
Now

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that I have made a Prostitution of Decorums; but in the Vehemence of Compassion, and to save the Life of a Person of so much Importance---

Wait. I esteem it so---

Lady. Or else you wrong my Condescension---

Wait. I do not, I do not---

Lady. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair Shrine of Virtue.

Lady. If you think the least Scruple of Carnality was an Ingredient---

Wait. Dear Madam, no. You are all *Camphire* and *Frankincense*, all *Chastity* and *Odour*.

Lady. Or that---

S C E N E XIII.

[*To them*] Foible.

Foib. Madam, the Dancers are ready, and there's one with a Letter, who must deliver it into your own Hands.

Lady. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a Person who would suffer Racks in Honour's Cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly.

S C E N E XIV.

Waitwell, Foible.

Wait. Fy, fy!-- What a Slavery have I undergone? Spouse, hast thou any *Cordial*? I want *Spirits*.

Foib. What a washy Rogue art thou, to pant thus for a Quarter of an Hour's Lying and Swearing to a fine Lady?

Wait. O, she is the Antidote to Desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't--- I shall have no Appetite to Iteration of Nuptials---this eight and forty Hours--- By this Hand I'd rather be a Chairman in the Dog-days--- than act Sir Rowland 'till this time To-morrow.

S C E N E XV.

[*To them*] Lady with a Letter.

Lady. Call in the Dancers;--- Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the Entertainment. [*Dance.*]

Now, with your Permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my

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my Letter—I would open it in your Presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy I would burn it—speak if it does—but you may see the Superscription is like a Woman's Hand.

Foib. By Heav'n! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it,—my Heart akes—get it from her— [To him.

Wait. A Woman's Hand? No, Madam, that's no Woman's Hand, I see that already. That's some Body whose Throat must be cut.

Lady. Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a Proof of your Passion by your Jealousy, I promise you I'll make a Return, by a frank Communication—You shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here.

Reads.—Madam, though unknown to you, [Look you there, 'tis from no Body that I know.]—I have that Honour for your Character, that I think my self oblig'd to let you know you are abus'd. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland is a Cheat and a Rascal—

Oh Heav'n's! what's this?

Foib. Unfortunate, all's ruin'd.

Wait. How, how, let me see, let me see—reading, *A Rascal and disguis'd and suborn'd for that Imposture,*—
O Villany! O Villany!—by the Contrivance of—

Lady. I shall faint, I shall die, oh!

Foib. Say 'tis your Nephew's Hand.—Quickly, his Plot, swear, swear it.— [To him.

Wait. Here's a Villain! Madam, don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

Lady. Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the Hand—A Woman's Hand? The Rascal writes a sort of a large Hand; your Roman Hand—I saw there was a Throat to be cut presently. If he were my Son, as he is my Nephew, I'd pistol him—

Foib. O Treachery! But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his Writing?

Wait. Sure! Am I here? do I live? do I love this Pearl of India? I have twenty Letters in my Pocket from him, in the same Character.

Lady. How!

Foib. O what Luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present

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present at this Juncture! This was the Business that brought Mr. *Mirabell* disguis'd to *Madam Millamant* this Afternoon? I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me and would have hid his Face.

Lady. How, how! --- I heard the Villain was in the House indeed; and now I remember, my Niece went away abruptly, when Sir *Wilfull* was to have made his Addressee.

Foib. Then, then *Madam*, Mr. *Mirabell* waited for her in her Chamber; but I would not tell your Ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive Sir *Rowland*,

Wait. Enough, his Dare is short.

Foib. No, good Sir *Rowland*, don't incur the Law.

Wait. Law! I care not for Law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good Cause—My Lady shall be satisfy'd of my Truth and Innocence, tho' it cost me my Life.

Lady. No, dear Sir *Rowland*, don't fight, if you should be kill'd I must never shew my Face; or hang'd,—O consider my Reputation, Sir *Rowland*,—No you shan't fight,—I'll go in and examine my Niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, Sir *Rowland*, by all your Love not to fight.

Wait. I am charm'd, *Madam*, I obey. But some Proof you must let me give you; I'll go for a black Box, which contains the Writings of my whole Estate, and deliver that into your Hands.

Lady. Ay dear Sir *Rowland*, that will be some Comfort, bring the black Box.

Wait. And may I presume to bring a Contract to be sign'd this Night? May I hope so far?

Lady. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray come alive. O this is a happy Discovery.

Wait. Dead or alive I'll come—and married we will be in spite of Treachery; ay and get an Heir that shall defeat the last remaining Glimpse of Hope in my abandoned Nephew. Come, my Buxom Widow:

Ere long you shall substantial Proof receive

That I'm an arrant Knight —————

Foib. Or arrant Knave.

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ACT V. SCENE I.

[SCENE continues.]

Lady Wishfort, and Foible.

Lady. OUT of my House, out of my House, thou *Viper*, thou Serpent, that I have foster'd; thou bosom Traitefs, that I rais'd from nothing——Begone, begone, begone, go, go.——That I took from washing of old Gause and weaving of dead Hair, with a bleak blue Nose, over a Chafing-dish of starv'd Embers, and dining behind a Traver's Rag, in a Shop no bigger than a Bird-cage,——go, go, starve again, do, do,

Foib. Dear Madam, I'll beg Pardon on my Knees.

Lady. Away, out, out, go set up for your self again——do, drive a Trade, do, with your Three-penny-worth of small Ware, flaunting upon a Packtread, under a Brandy-seller's Bulk, or against a dead Wall by a Ballad-monger. Go, hang out an old *Frisoneer-gorget*, with a Yard of Yellow *Colberteen* again; do; an old gnaw'd Mask, two Rows of Pins, and a Child's Fiddle; A Glas Necklace with the Beads broken, and a Quilted Night-cap with one Ear. Go, go, drive a Trade,——These were your Commodoties, you treacherous Trull, this was the Merchandise you dealt in, when I took you into my House, plac'd you next my self, and made you Governant of my whole Family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feather'd your Nest?

Foib. No, no, dear Madam, Do but hear me, have but a Moment's Patience——I'll confefs all. Mr. *Mirabell* seduc'd me; I am not the first that he has wheed'd with his dissembling Tongue; Your Ladyship's own Wisdom has been deluded by him, then how should I, a poor Ignorant, defend my self? O Madam, if you knew but what he promis'd me, and how he assur'd me your Ladyship should come to no Damage——Or else the Wealth of the *Indies* should not have brib'd me to conspire against so Good, so Sweet, so Kind a Lady as you have been to me.

Lady. No Damage? What to betray me, to marry me to a Cast-serving-Man; to make me a Receptacle, an

Hospital

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Hospital for a decay'd Pimp? No Damage? O thou frontless Impudence, more than a big-belly'd Actress.

Foib. Pray do but hear me, Madam, he could not marry your Ladyship, Madam — No indeed his Marriage was to have been void in Law; for he was marry'd to me first, to secure your Ladyship. He could not have bedded your Ladyship; for if he had consummated with your Ladyship, he must have run the risque of the Law, and been put upon his Clergy — Yes indeed, I enquir'd of the Law in that case before I would meddle or make.

Lady. What, then I have been your Property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems, — while you were catering for *Mirabell*; I have been Broker for you? What, have you made a passive Bawd of me? — this exceeds all Precedent; I am brought to fine Uses, to become a Botcher of second-hand Marriages between *Abigail*s and *Andrew*s! I'll couple you. Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your *Philander*. I'll *Duke's-Place* you, as I'm a Person. Your Turtle is in Custody already: You shall Coo in the same Cage, if there be Constable or Warrant in the Parish.

Foib. O that ever I was born, O that I was ever marry'd, — a Bride, ay I shall be a *Bridewell*-Bride. Oh!

SCENE II.

Mrs. Fainall, Foible.

Mrs. Fain. Poor *Foible*, what's the matter?

Foib. O Madam, my Lady's gone for a Constable; I shall be had to a Justice, and put to *Bridewell* to beat Hemp; poor *Waitwell*'s gone to Prison already.

Mrs. Fain. Have a good Heart, *Foible*; *Mirabell*'s gone to give Security for him. This is all *Marwood*'s and my Husband's doing.

Foib. Yes, yes; I know it, Madam; she was in my Lady's Closet, and overheard all that you said to me before Dinner. She sent the Letter to my Lady; and that missing Effect, Mr. *Fainall* laid this Plot to arrest *Waitwell*, when he pretended to go for the Papers; and in the mean time Mrs. *Marwood* declar'd all to my Lady.

Mrs. Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the Letter? — My Mother does not suspect my being in the Confederacy? I fancy *Marwood* has not told her, tho she has told my Husband.

D 4

Foib

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Foib. Yes, Madam; but my Lady did not see that Part: We stifled the Letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous Devil told Mr. *Fainall* of your Ladyship then?

Mrs. Fain. Ay, all's out, my Affair with *Mirabell*, every thing discover'd. This is the last Day of our living together, that's my Comfort.

Foib. Indeed Madam, and so 'tis a Comfort if you knew all, — he has been even with your Ladyship; which I cou'd have told you long enough since, but I love to keep Peace and Quietness by my good Will: I had rather bring Friends together, than set 'em at Distance. But Mrs. *Marwood* and he are nearer related than ever their Parents thought for.

Mrs. Fain. Say'st thou so, *Foible*? Canst thou prove this?

Foib. I can take my Oath of it, Madam, so can Mrs. *Mincing*; we have had many a fair Word from Madam *Marwood*, to conceal something that passed in our Chamber one Evening when you were at *Hide-Park*; — and we were thought to have gone a Walking: But we went up unawares, — tho' we were sworn to Secrecy too; Madam *Marwood* took a Book and swore us upon it: But it was but a Book of Poems, — So long as it was not a Bible-Oath, we may break it with a safe Conscience.

Mrs. Fain. This Discovery is the most opportune Thing I cou'd wish. Now *Mincing*?

S C E N E III.

[*To them*] *Mincing*.

Minc. My Lady wou'd speak with Mrs. *Foible*, *Mem.* Mr. *Mirabell* is with her; he has set your Spouse at liberty, Mrs. *Foible*, and wou'd have you hide your self in my Lady's Closet, 'till my old Lady's Anger is abated. O, my old Lady is in a perilous Passion, at something Mr. *Fainall* has said; he swears, and my old Lady cries. There's a fearful Hurricane I vow. He says *Mem*, how that he'll have my Lady's Fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorce'd.

Mrs. Fain. Does your Lady or *Mirabell* know that?

Minc

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Minc. Yes *Mem*, they have sent me to see if Sir *Wishfull* be sober, and to bring him to them. My Lady is resolved to have him I think, rather than lose such a vast Sum as Six Thousand Pound. O, come Mrs. *Foible*, I hear my old Lady.

Mrs. Fain. *Foible*, you must tell *Mincing*, that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foib. Yes, yes, Madam.

Minc. O yes *Mem*, I'll vouch any thing for your Ladyship's Service, be what it will.

S C E N E IV.

Mrs. Fainall, *Lady Wishfort*, *Marwood*.

Lady. O my dear Friend, how can I enumerate the Benefits that I have receiv'd from your Goodness? To you I owe the timely Discovery of the false Vows of *Mirabell*; to you I owe the Detection of the Impostor Sir *Rowland*. And now you are become an Intercessor with my Son-in-law, to save the Honour of my House, and compound for the Frailties of my Daughter. Well Friend, You are enough to reconcile me to the bad World, or else I would retire to Desarts and Solitudes; and feed harmless Sheep by Groves and purling Streams. Dear *Marwood*, let us leave the World, and retire by our selves and be Shepherdesses.

Mrs. Mar. Let us first dispatch the Affair in Hand, Madam. We shall have Leisure to think of Retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the Treaty.

Lady. O Daughter, Daughter, is it possible thou should'st be my Child, Bone of my Bone, and Flesh of my Flesh, and as I may say, another Me, and yet transgress the most minute Particle of severe Virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to Iniquity, who have been cast in the direct Mold of Virtue? I have not only been a Mold but a Pattern for you, and a Model for you, after you were brought into the World.

Mrs. Fain. I don't understand your Ladyship.

Lady. Not understand? Why have you not been Naught? Have you not been Sophisticated? Not understand? Here I am ruin'd to compound for your Caprices and your

D S

Cuckoldoms.

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Cuckoldoms. I must pawn my Plate and my Jewels, and ruin my Niece, and all little enough —

Mrs. Fain. I am wrong'd and abus'd, and so are you. 'Tis a false Accusation, as false as Hell, as false as your Friend there, ay or your Friend's Friend, my false Husband.

Mrs. Mar. My Friend, *Mrs. Fainall?* Your Husband my Friend, what do you mean?

Mrs. Fain. I know what I mean, Madam, and so do you; and so shall the World at a Time convenient.

Mrs. Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, Madam. More Temper would look more like Innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my Zeal to serve your Ladyship and Family, should admit of Misconstruction, or make me liable to Affronts. You will pardon me, Madam, if I meddle no more with an Affair, in which I am not personally concern'd.

Lady. O dear Friend, I am so asham'd that you should meet with such Returns; — You ought to ask Pardon on your Knees, ungrateful Creature; she deserves more from you, than all your Life can accomplish — O don't leave me destitute in this Perplexity; — No, stick to me, my good Genius.

Mrs. Fain. I tell you, Madam, you're abus'd — Stick to you? ay, like a Leach, to suck your best Blood — she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a Bodkin, nor part with a Brass Counter, in Composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their Aspersions: I know my own Innocence, and dare stand a Trial.

S C E N E V.

Lady Wishfort, Marwood.

Lady. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wrong'd after all, ha? I don't know what to think, — and I promise you, her Education has been unexceptionable — I may say it; for I chiefly made it my own Care to initiate her very Infancy in the Rudiments of Virtue, and to impress upon her tender Years a young Odium and Aversion to the very Sight of Men, — ay Friend, she would ha' shriek'd if she had but seen a Man, 'till she was in her Teens. As I'm a Person 'tis true — She was

never

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never suffer'd to play with a Male-Child, tho' but in Coats; Nay her very Babies ware of the *Feminine Gender*, — O, she never look'd a Man in the Face but her own Father, or the Chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a Woman, by the help of his long Garments, and his sleek Face; 'till she was going in her Fifteen.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twas much she should be deceiv'd so long.

Lady. I warrant you, or she would never have born to have been catechiz'd by him; and have heard his long Lectures against Singing and Dancing, and such Debaucheries; and going to filthy Plays; and profane Musick-meetings, where the lewd Trebles squeek nothing but Bawdy, and the Bases roar Blasphemy. O, she would have swoon'd at the Sight or Name of an obscene Play-Book — and can I think after all this, that my Daughter can be Naught? What, a Whore? And thought it Excommunication to set her Foot within the Door of a Play-house. O dear Friend, I can't believe it, no, no; as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mrs. Mar. Prove it, Madam? What, and have your Name prostituted in a publick Court; yours and your Daughter's Reputation worry'd at the Bar by a Pack of bawling Lawyers? To be usher'd in with an O *Yes* of Scandal; and have your Case open'd by an old fumbling Lecher in a Quoit like a Man Midwife, to bring your Daughter's Infamy to Light; to be a Theme for legal Punsters, and Quiblers by the Statute; and become a Jest, against a Rule of Court, where there is no Precedent for a Jest in any Record; not even in *Dooms-day-Book*: To discompose the Gravity of the Bench, and provoke naughty Interrogatories in more naughty Law *Latin*; while the good Judge, tickl'd with the Proceeding, simpers under a Gray Beard, and figes off and on his Cushion as if he had swallow'd *Cambarides*, or sat upon *Cow-Itch*.

Lady. O, 'tis very hard!

Mrs. Mar. And then to have my young Revellers of the Temple take Notes, like Prentices at a Conventicle; and after talk it over again in Commons, or before Drawers in an Eating-House.

Lady. Worse and worse.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Mar. Nay this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must after this be consign'd by the Short-hand Writers to the publick Press; and from thence be transferr'd to the Hands nay into the Throats and Lungs of Hawkers, with Voices more licentious than the loud Flounder-man's: And this you must hear 'till you are stunn'd; nay, you must hear nothing else for some Days.

Lady. O, 'tis insupportable. No, no, dear Friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll Compound. I'll give up all, my self and my all, my Niece and her all — any thing, every thing for Composition.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, Madam, I advise nothing, I only lay before you, as a Friend, the Inconveniences which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall, if he will be satisfy'd to huddle up all in Silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather Congratulate than Console with you.

S C E N E VI.

Fainall, Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood.

Lady. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood: No, no, I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, Madam; I have suffer'd my self to be overcome by the Importunity of this Lady your Friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper Estate during Life; on Condition you oblige your self never to marry, under such Penalty as I think convenient.

Lady. Never to marry?

Fain. No more Sir Rowlands, — the next Imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs. Mar. That Condition, I dare answer, my Lady will consent to, without Difficulty; she has already but too much experienc'd the Perfidiousness of Men. Besides, Madam, when we retire to our Pastoral Solitude we shall bid adieu to all other Thoughts.

Lady. Ay, that's true; but in case of Necessity; as of Health, or some such Emergency —

Fain. O, if you are prescrib'd Marriage, you shall be consider'd; I will only reserve to my self the Power to choose for you. If your Physick be wholsom, it matters not, who is your Apothecary. Next, my Wife shall settle

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on me the Remainder of her Fortune, not made over already; and for her Maintenance depend entirely on my Discretion.

Lady. This is most inhumanly savage; exceeding the Barbarity of a *Muscovite* Husband.

Fain. I learn'd it from his *Czarish* Majesty's Retinue, in a Winter Evening's Conference over Brandy and Pepper, amongst other Secrets of Matrimony and Policy, as they are at present practis'd in the Northern Hemisphere. But [this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endow'd, in right of my Wife, with that six thousand Pound, which is the Moiety of Mrs. *Millamant's* Fortune in your Possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last Will and Testament of your deceas'd Husband, Sir *Jonathan Wishfort*) by her Disobedience in Contracting her self against your Consent or Knowledge; and by refusing the offer'd Match with Sir *Wilfull Witwoud*, which you, like a careful Aunt, had provided for her.

Lady. My Nephew was *non Compos*; and could not make his Addressee.

Fain. I come to make Demands — I'll hear no Objections.

Lady. You will grant me Time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the Instrument is drawing, to which you must set your Hand 'till more sufficient Deeds can be perfected: which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the mean while I will go for the said Instrument, and 'till my Return you may balance this Matter in your own Discretion.

S C E N E VII.

Lady Wishfort, Mrs. Marwood.

Lady. This Insolence is beyond all Precedent, all Parallel; must I be subject to this merciless Villain?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis severe indeed, Madam, that you shou'd smart for your Daughter's Wantonness.

Lady. 'Twas against my Consent that she marry'd this Barbarian, but she wou'd have him, tho' her Year was not out. — Ah! her first Husband, my Son *Languish*, wou'd not have carry'd it thus. Well, that was my Choice, this

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this is hers; she is match'd now with a Witness—— I shall be mad, dear Friend, is there no Comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this Rebel-rate?—— Here come two more of my *Egyptian* Plagues too.

S C E N E VIII.

[*To them*] Millamant, *Sir Wilfull.*

Sir Wil. Aunt, your Servant.

Lady. Out *Caterpillar*, call not me Aunt; I know thee not.

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in Disguise, as they say,—— 'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no Offence, Aunt—— and if I did I am willing to make Satisfaction; and what can a Man say fairer? If I have broke any thing I'll pay for't, an it cost a Pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more Words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my Cousin. So pray let's all be Friends, she and I are agreed upon the Matter before a Witness.

Lady. How's this, dear Niece? Have I any Comfort? Can this be true?

Milla. I am content to be a Sacrifice to your Repose, Madam; and to convince you that I had no Hand in the Plot, as you were misinform'd, I have laid my Commands on *Mirabell* to come in Person, and be a Witness that I give my Hand to this Flower of *Knighthood*; and for the Contract that pass'd between *Mirabell* and me, I have oblig'd him to make a Resignation of it in your Ladyship's Presence;—— He is without, and waits your leave for Admittance.

Lady. Well, I'll swear I am something reviv'd at this Testimony of your Obedience; but I cannot admit that Traitor,—— I fear I cannot fortify my self to support his Appearance. He is as terrible to me as a *Gorgon*; if I see him I fear I shall turn to Stone, petrify incessantly.

Milla. If you disoblige him he may resent your Refusal, and insist upon the Contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady. Are you sure it will be the last time?—— If I were sure of that—— shall I never see him again?

Milla,

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Milla. Sir *Wilfull*, you and he are to Travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. 'Sheart the Gentleman's a civil Gentleman, Aunt, let him come in; why we are sworn Brothers and Fellow-Travellers. — We are to be *Pylades* and *Orestes*, he and I — He is to be my Interpreter in Foreign Parts. He has been Over-seas once already; and with *proviso* that I marry my Cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me Company. — 'Sheart, I'll call him in, — an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him.

[*Goes to the Door and hems.*]
Mrs. Mar. This is precious Fooling, if it wou'd pass; but I'll know the Bottom of it.

Lady. O dear *Marwood*, you are not going?

Mar. Not far, Madam; I'll return immediately.

S C E N E. VIII.

Lady Withfort, *Millamant*, *Sir Wilfull*, *Mirabell*.

Sir Wil. Look up, Man, I'll stand by you, 'sbud an she do frown, she can't-kill you; — Besides — harkee she dare not frown desperately, because her Face is none of her own; 'Sheart, and she shou'd her Forehead wou'd wrinkle like the Coat of a Cream-cheese; but mum for that, Fellow-Traveller.

Mira. If a deep Sense of the many Injuries I have offer'd to so good a Lady, with a sincere Remorse, and a hearty Contrition, can but obtain the least Glance of Compassion, I am too happy. — Ah Madam, there was a time — But let it be forgotten — I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high Place I once held, of sitting at your Feet; nay kill me not, by turning from me in Disdain — I come not to plead for Favour; — Nay not for Pardon; I am a Suppliant only for Pity — I am going where I never shall behold you more —

Sir Wil. How, Fellow-Traveller! — You shall go by your self then.

Mira. Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten. — I ask no more.

Sir Wil. By'r Lady a very reasonable Request, and will cost you nothing, Aunt, — Come, come, forgive and forget, Aunt; why you must an you are a Christian.

Mira.

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Mira. Consider, Madam, in reality, you could not receive much Prejudice; it was an innocent Device; tho' I confess it had a Face of Guiltiness,—it was at most an Artifice which Love contriv'd—And Errors which Love produces have ever been accounted *Venial*. At least think it is Punishment enough, that I have lost what in my Heart I hold most dear, that to your cruel Indignation I have offer'd up this Beauty, and with her my Peace and Quiet; nay all my Hopes of future Comfort.

Sir Wil. An he does not move me, wou'd I may never be O' the *Quorum*.—An it were not as good a Deed as to drink, to give her to him again,—I wou'd I might never take Shipping—Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My Contract went no farther than a little Mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry;—One doleful Sigh more from my Fellow-Traveller, and 'tis dissolv'd.

Lady. Well, Nephew, upon your Account—Ah, he has a false insinuating Tongue—Well, Sir, I will stifle my just Resentment at my Nephew's Request. —I will endeavour what I can to forget,--- but on *proviso* that you resign the Contract with my Niece immediately.

Mira. It is in Writing, and with Papers of Concern; but I have sent my Servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all Acknowledgments for your transcendent Goodness.

Lady. Oh, he has Witchcraft in his Eyes and Tongue;—When I did not see him I cou'd have brib'd a Villain to his Assassination; but his Appearance rakes the Embers which have so long lain smother'd in my Breast--- [*Aside*]

S C E N E IX.

[*To them*] Fainall, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. Your Date of Deliberation, Madam, is expir'd. Here is the Instrument; are you prepar'd to sign?

Lady. If I were prepar'd, I am not impower'd. My Niece exerts a lawful Claim, having match'd her self by my Direction to Sir Wilfull.

Fain. That Sham is too gross to pass on me— tho' 'tis impos'd on you, Madam,

Milla. Sir, I have given my Consent.

Mira.

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Mira. And, Sir, I have resign'd my Pretensions.

Sir Wil. And, Sir, I assert my Right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, Sir, and of your Instrument. S'heart an you talk of an Instrument, Sir, I have an old Fox by my Thigh shall hack your Instrument of *Ram Vellam* to Shreds, Sir. It shall not be sufficient for a *Mitimus* or a Tailor's Measure; therefore withdraw your Instrument, Sir, or by'r Lady I shall draw mine.

Lady. Hold, Nephew, hold.

Milla. Good Sir *Wilful*, respite your Valour.

Fain. Indeed? Are you provided of your Guard, with your single Beef-eater there? But I'm prepared for you; and insist upon my first Proposal. You shall submit your own Estate to my Management, and absolutely make over my Wife's to my sole Use; as pursuant to the Purport and Tenor of this other Covenant---I suppose, Madam, your Consent is not requisite in this Case; nor, Mr. *Mirabell*, your Resignation; nor, Sir *Wilfull*, your Right. ---You may draw your Fox if you please, Sir, and make a *Bear-garden* Flourish somewhere else: For here it will not avail. This, my Lady *Wishfort*, must be subscrib'd, or your darling Daughter's turn'd a-drift, like a leaky Hulk, to sink or swim, as she and the Current of this lewd Town can agree.

Lady. Is there no Means, no Remedy to stop my Ruin? Ungrateful Wretch! dost thou not owe thy Being, thy Subsistence, to my Daughter's Fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my Possession.

Mira. But that you wou'd not accept of a Remedy from my Hands—I own I have not deserv'd you shou'd owe any Obligation to me; or else perhaps I cou'd advise—

Lady. O what? what? to save me and my Child from Ruin, from Want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to any Thing to come, to be deliver'd from this Tyranny.

Mira. Ay Madam; but that is too late, my Reward is intercepted. You have dispos'd of her, who only cou'd have made me a Compensation for all my Services;—But be it as it may, I am resolv'd I'll serve you; you shall not be wrong'd in this savage manner.

Lady.

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Lady. How! Dear Mr. *Mirabell*, can you be so generous at last! But it is not possible. *Harkee*, I'll break my Nephew's Match; you shall have my Niece yet, and all her Fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent Danger.

Mira. Will you? I take you at your Word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two Criminals to appear.

Lady. Ay, ay, any body, any body.

Mira. *Foible* is one, and a Penitent.

S C E N E X.

[To them] *Mrs. Fainall*, *Foible*, *Mincing*.

Mrs. Mar. O my Shame! These corrupt Things are brought hither to expose me. [To *Fain.*

[*Mira.* and *Lady* go to *Mrs. Fain.* and *Foib.*

Fain. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it; 'tis but the *Way of the World*. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one Tittle of my Terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foib. Yes indeed, Madam, I'll take my Bible-oath of it.

Minc. And so will I, *Mem*.

Lady. O *Marwood*, *Marwood*, art thou false? My Friend deceive me! Hast thou been a wicked Accomplice with that profligate Man?

Mrs. Mar. Have you so much Ingratitude and Injustice, to give Credit against your Friend to the Aspersions of two such mercenary Truls?

Minc. Mercenary, *Mem*? I scorn your Words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. *Fainall* in the blue Garret; by the same Token, you swore us to Secrecy upon *Messalina's* Poems. Mercenary? No, if we wou'd have been Mercenary, we shou'd have held our Tongues; you wou'd have brib'd us sufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an insignificant Thing.—Well, what are you the better for this! Is this Mr. *Mirabell's* Expedient? I'll be put off no longer—You, Thing, that was a Wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee where-withal to hide thy Shame: Your Body shall be Naked as your Reputation.

Mrs. Fain. I despise you, and defy your Malice—You have

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have aspers'd me wrongfully—I have prov'd your Falseness—Go you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but starve together—Perish.

Fain. Not while you are worth a Groat, indeed my Dear. Madam, I'll be fool'd no longer.

Lady. Ah Mr. *Mirabell*, this is small Comfort, the Detection of this Affair.

Mira. O in good time—Your leave for the other Offender and Penitent to appear, Madam.

S C E N E XI.

[*To them*] Wait well with a Box of Writings.

Lady. O Sir Rowland——Well, Rascal.

Wait. What your Ladyship pleases.——I have brought the Black-Box at last, Madam.

Mira. Give it me, Madam, you remember your Promise.

Lady. Ay, dear Sir.

Mira. Where are the Gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, Sir, rubbing their Eyes,—just risen from Sleep.

Fain. S'death what's this to me? I'll not wait your private Concerns.

S C E N E XII.

[*To them*] Petulant, Witwoud.

Pet. How now? what's the matter? who's Hand's out?

Wit. Hey day! what are you all got together, like Players at the End of the last Act?

Mira. You may remember, Gentlemen, I once requested your Hands as Witnesses to a certain Parchment.

Wit. Ay I do, my Hand I remember——*Petulant* set his Mark.

Mira. You wrong him, his Name is fairly written, as shall appear——You do not remember, Gentlemen, any thing of what that Parchment contained——

[*Undoing the Box.*]

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

Mira. Very well, now you shall know——Madam, your Promise.

Lady. Ay, ay, Sir, upon my Honour.

[*Mira.*]

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Mira. Mr. *Fainall*, it is now Time that you shou'd know, that your Lady, while she was at her own Disposal, and before you had by your Insinuations wheedl'd her out of a pretended Settlement of the greatest Part of her Fortune——

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mira. Yes, Sir. I say that this Lady, while a Widow, having it seems receiv'd some Cautions respecting your Inconstancy and Tyranny of Temper, which from her own partial Opinion and Fondness of you she cou'd never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholsom Advice of Friends and of Sages learn'd in the Laws of this Land, deliver this same as her Act and Deed to me, in Trust; and to the Uses within mention'd. You may read if you please—[*Holding out the Parchment.*] tho' perhaps what is written on the Back may serve your Occasions.

Fain. Very likely, Sir. What's here? Damnation?

[*Reads.*] *A Deed of Conveyance of the whole Estate real of Arabella Languish, Widow, in Trust to Edward Mirabell.* Confusion!

Mira. Even so, Sir, 'tis *the Way of the World*, Sir; of the Widows of the World. I suppose this Deed may bear an elder Date than what you have obtain'd from your Lady.

Fain. Perfidious Fiend! then thus I'll be reveng'd.——

[*Offers to run at Mrs. Fain.*]

Sir Wil. Hold, Sir, now you may make your Bear-Garden flourish somewhere else, Sir.

Fain. *Mirabell*, you shall hear of this, Sir, be sure you shall.——Let me pass, Oaf.

Mrs. Fain. Madam, you seem to stifle your Resentment: You had better give it Vent.

Mrs. Mar. Yes, it shall have Vent——and to your Confusion, or I'll perish in the Attempt.

S C E N E *the Last.*

Lady Withfort, *Millamant*, *Mirabell*, *Mrs. Fainall*, *Sir Will.* full, *Petulant*, *Witwoud*, *Foible*, *Mincing*, *Waitwell*.

Lady. O Daughter, Daughter, 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy Mother's Prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Thank Mr. *Mirabell*, a cautious Friend, to whose Advice all is owing.

Lady.

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Lady. Well, Mr. *Mirabell*, you have kept your Promise—and I must perform mine.——First I pardon for your sake Sir *Rowland* there and *Foible*——The next thing is to break the Matter to my Nephew—and how to do that—

Mira. For that, Madam, give your self no Trouble,—let me have your Consent—Sir *Wilfull* is my Friend; he has had Compassion upon Lovers, and generously engag'd a Volunteer in this Action, for our Service; and now designs to prosecute his Travels.

Sir *Will.* 'Sheart, Aunt, I have no mind to marry. My Cousin's a fine Lady, and the Gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my Resolution is to see Foreign Parts—I have set on't—and when I'm set on't, I must do't. And if these two Gentlemen wou'd travel too, I think they may be spar'd.

Pet. For my part, I say little—I think things are best off or on.

Wit. I gad I understand nothing of the matter,—I'm in a Maze yet, like a Dog in a Dancing-School.

Lady. Well, Sir, take her, and with her all the Joy I can give you.

Milla. Why does the Man take me? Wou'd you have me give my self to you over again?

Mira. Ay, and over and over again; [*Kisses her Hand.*] I wou'd have you as often as possibly I can. Well, Heav'n grant I love you not too well, that's all my Fear.

Sir *Wil.* 'Sheart you'll have time enough to toy after you're marry'd; or if you will toy now, let us have a Dance in the mean time; that we who are not Lovers may have some other Employment, besides looking on.

Mira. With all my Heart, dear Sir *Wilful*. What shall we do for Musick?

Foib. O Sir, some that were provided for Sir *Rowland*'s Entertainment are yet within Call. [*A Dance.*]

Lady. As I am a Person I can hold out no longer;—I have wasted my Spirits so to Day already, that I am ready to sink under the Fatigue; and I cannot but have some Fears upon me yet, that my Son *Fainall* will pursue some desperate Course.

Mira. Madam, disquiet not your self on that account; to my Knowledge his Circumstances are such, he must of Force

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Force comply. For my part I will contribute all that in me lies to a Reunion: In the mean time, Madam, [To Mrs. Fain.] let me before these Witnesses restore to you this Deed of Trust; it may be a Means, well manag'd, to make you live easily together.

*From hence let those be warn'd, who mean to wed;
Lest mutual Falshood stain the Bridal-Bed:
For each Deceiver to his Cost may find,
That Marriage Frauds too oft are paid in kind.*

[Exeunt Omnes]



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EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

After our Epilogue this Crowd dismisses,
I'm thinking how this Play'll be pull'd to Pieces;
But pray consider, ere you doom its Fall,
How hard a thing 'twou'd be, to please you all.
There are some Criticks so with Spleen diseas'd,
They scarcely come inclining to be Pleas'd:
And sure he must have more than mortal Skill,
Who pleases any one against his Will.
Then, all bad Poets we are sure are Foes;
And how their Numbers swell'd, the Town well knows:
In shoals, I've mark'd 'em judging in the Pit;
Tho' they're on no Pretence for Judgment fit,
But that they have been damn'd for want of Wit.
Since when, they by their own Offences taught,
Set up for Spies on Plays, and finding Fault,
Others there are whose Malice we'd prevent;
Such, who watch Plays, with scurrilous Intent
To mark out who by Characters are meant.
And tho' no perfect Likeness they can trace;
Yet each pretends to know the Copy'd Face.
These, with false Glosses feed their own Ill-nature,
And turn to Libel, what was meant a Satire.
May such malicious Fops this Fortune find,
To think themselves alone the Fools design'd:
If any are so arrogantly Vain,
To think they singly can support a Scene,
And furnish Fool enough to entertain.
For well the Learn'd and the Judicious know,
That Satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,
As any one abstracted Fop to shew.

EPILOGUE.

*For, as when Painters form a matchless Face,
They from each Fair one catch some different Graces;
And shining Features in one Portrait blend,
To which no single Beauty must pretend:
So Poets oft, do in one Piece expose
Whole Belles Assemblies of Coquets and Beaux.*

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